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# The Eternal Goodness

by Charles Kingsley

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# THE ETERNAL GOODNESS

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# THE ETERNAL GOODNESS

AND

# OTHER SERMONS

BY

CHARLES KINGSLEY

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# THE ETERNAL GOODNESS.

"Thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself." — *Matt.* xxii. 39.

WHY are wrong things wrong? Why, for instance, is it wrong to steal?

Because God has forbidden it, you may answer. But is it so? Whatsoever God forbids must be wrong. But, is it wrong because God forbids it, or does God forbid it because it is wrong?

For instance, suppose that God had *not* forbidden us to steal, would it be right then to steal, or at least, not wrong?

We must really think of this. It is no mere question of words, it is a solemn practical question, which has to do with our every-day conduct, and yet which goes down to the deepest of all matters, even to the depths of God himself.

The question is simply this. Did God, who made all things, *make* right and wrong? Many people think so. They think that God *made* goodness. But how can that be? For if God made goodness, there could have been no goodness before God made it. That is clear. But God was always good, good from all eternity. But how could that be? How could God be good, before there was any goodness made? That notion will not do then. And all we can say is that goodness is eternal and everlasting, just as God is: because God was and is and ever will be eternally and always good.

But is eternal goodness one thing, and the eternal God another? That cannot be, again; for as the Athanasian Creed tells us so wisely and well, there are not many Eternals, but one Eternal. Therefore goodness must be the Spirit of God; and God must be the Spirit of goodness; and right is nothing else but the character of the everlasting God, and of those who are inspired by God.

What is wrong, then? Whatever is unlike right; whatever is unlike goodness; whatever is

unlike God,— that is wrong. And why does God forbid us to do wrong? Simply because wrong is unlike himself. He is perfectly beautiful, perfectly blest and happy, because he is perfectly good; and he wishes to see all his creatures beautiful, blest, and happy: but they can only be so by being perfectly good; and they can only be perfectly good by being perfectly like God their Father; and they can only be perfectly like God the Father by being full of love, loving their neighbor as themselves.

For what do we mean when we talk of right, righteousness, goodness?

Many answers have been given to that question.

The old Romans, who were a stern, legal-minded people, used to say that righteousness meant to hurt no man, and to give every man his own. The Eastern people had a better answer still, which our blessed Lord used in one place, when he told them that righteousness was to do to other people as we would they should do to us; but the best answer, the perfect answer, is our Lord's in the text, "Thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself." This is the true, eternal

righteousness. Not a legal righteousness, not a righteousness made up of forms and ceremonies, of keeping days holy, and abstaining from meats, or any other arbitrary commands, whether of God or of man. This is God's goodness, God's righteousness, Christ's own goodness and righteousness. Do you not see what I mean? Remember only one word of St. John's: God is love. Love is the goodness of God. God is perfectly good, because he is perfect love. Then if you are full of love, you are good with the same goodness with which God is good, and righteous with Christ's righteousness. That was what St. Paul wished to be, when he wished to be found in Christ, not having his own righteousness, but the righteousness which is by faith in Christ. His own righteousness was the selfish and self-conceited righteousness which he had before his conversion, made up of forms, and ceremonies, and doctrines, which made him narrow-hearted, bigoted, self-conceited, fierce, cruel, a persecutor; the righteousness which made him stand by in cold blood to see St. Stephen stoned. But the righteousness which is by faith

in Christ is a loving heart, and a loving life, which every man will long to lead who believes really in Jesus Christ. For when he looks at Christ, Christ's humiliation, Christ's work, Christ's agony, Christ's death, and sees in it nothing but utter and perfect *Love* to poor sinful, undeserving man, then his heart makes answer, Yes, I believe in that! I believe and am sure that that is the most beautiful character in the world; that that is the utterly noble and right sort of person to be — full of love as Christ was. I ought to be like that. My conscience tells me that I ought. And I can be like that. Christ, who was so good himself, must wish to make me good like himself, and I can trust him to do it. I can have faith in him, that he will make me like hinself, full of the spirit of love, without which I shall be only useless and miserable. And I trust him enough to be sure that, good as he is, he cannot mean to leave me useless or miserable. So, by true faith in Christ, the man comes to have Christ's righteousness — that is, to be loving as Christ was. He believes that Christ's loving character is perfect beauty; that he must

be the Son of God, if his character be like that. He believes that Christ can and will fill him with the same spirit of love; and as he believes, so is it with him, and in him those words are fulfilled, "Whosoever shall confess that Jesus is the Son of God, God dwelleth in him, and he in God"; and that "If a man love me," says the Lord, "I and my Father will come to him, and take up our abode with him." Those are wonderful words; but if you will recollect what I have just said, you may understand a little of them. St. John puts the same thing very simply, but very boldly. "God is love," he says, "and he that dwelleth in love, dwelleth in God, and God in him." Strange as it may seem, it must be so if God be love. Let us thank God that it is true, and keep in mind what awful and wonderful creatures we are, that God should dwell in us; what blessed and glorious creatures we may become in time, if we will only listen to the voice of God who speaks within our hearts.

And what does that voice say? The old commandment, my friends, which was from the beginning, "Love one another." Whatever

thoughts or feeling in your hearts contradict that; whatever tempts you to despise your neighbor, to be angry with him, to suspect him, to fancy him shut out from God's love, that is not of God. No voice in our hearts is God's voice, but what says in some shape or other, "Love thy neighbor as thyself. Care for him, bear with him long, and try to do him good."

For love is of God, and every one that loveth is born of God, and knoweth God. He that loveth not knoweth not God, for God is love. Still less can he who is not loving fulfil the law; for the law of God is the very pattern and picture of God's character; and if a man does not know what God is like, he will never know what God's law is like; and though he may read his Bible all day long, he will learn no more from it than a dumb animal will, unless his heart is full of love. For love is the light by which we see God, by which we understand his Bible; by which we understand our duty, and God's dealings, in the world. Love is the light by which we understand our own hearts; by which we understand our neighbors' hearts. So it is.

If you hate any man, or have a spite against him, you will never know what is in that man's heart, never be able to form a just opinion of his character. If you want to understand human beings, or to do justice to their feelings, you must begin by loving them heartily and freely, and the more you like them the better you will understand them, and in general the better you will find them to be at heart, the more worthy of your trust, at least the more worthy of your compassion.

At least, so St. John says, "He that saith he is in the light, and hates his brother, is in darkness even till now, and knoweth not whither he goeth. But he that loveth his brother abideth in the light, and there is no occasion of stumbling in him."

No occasion of stumbling. That is, of making mistakes in our behavior to our neighbors, which cause scandal, drive them from us, and make them suspect us, dislike us — and perhaps with too good reason. Just think for yourselves. What does half the misery and all the quarrelling in the world come from, but from

people's loving themselves better than their neighbors? Would children be disobedient and neglectful to their parents, if they did not love themselves better than their parents? Why does a man kill, commit adultery, steal, bear false witness, covet his neighbor's goods, his neighbor's custom, his neighbor's rights, but because he loves his own pleasure or interest better than his neighbor's, loves himself better than the man whom he wrongs? Would a man take advantage of his neighbor if he loved him as himself? Would he be hard on his neighbor, and say, Pay me the uttermost farthing, if he loved him as he loves himself? Would he speak evil of his neighbor behind his back, if he loved him as himself? Would he cross his neighbor's temper, just because he *will* have his own way, right or wrong, if he loved him as himself? Judge for yourselves. What would the world become like this moment if every man loved his neighbor as himself, thought of his neighbor as much as he thinks of himself? Would it not become heaven on earth at once? There would be no need then of soldiers and

policemen, lawyers, rates and taxes, my friends, and all the expensive and heavy machinery which is now needed to force people into keeping something of God's law. Ay, there would be no need of sermons, preachers, and prophets to tell men of God's law, and warn them of the misery of breaking it. They would keep the law of their own free will, by love. For love is the fulfilling of the law; and as St. Augustine says, "Love your neighbor, and then do what you will — because you will be sure to will what is right." So truly did our Lord say, that on this one commandment hung all the law and the prophets.

But though that blessed state of things will not come to the whole world till the day when Christ shall reign in that new heaven and new earth, in which Righteousness shall dwell, still it may come here, now, on earth, to each and every one of us, if we will but ask from God the blessed gift, — to love our neighbor as we love ourselves.

And then, my friends, whether we be rich or poor, fortunate or unfortunate, still that spirit of

love which is the Spirit of God, will be its exceeding great reward.

I say, its own reward.

For what is to be our reward, if we do our duty earnestly, however imperfectly? "Well done, thou good and faithful servant, enter thou into the joy of thy Lord."

And what is the joy of our Lord? What is the joy of Christ? The joy and delight which springs forever in his great heart, from feeling that he is forever doing good; from loving all, and living for all; from knowing that if not all, yet millions on millions are grateful to him, and will be forever.

My friends, if you have ever done a kind action; if you have ever helped any one in distress, or given up a pleasure for the sake of others — do you not know that that deed gave you a peace, a self-content, a joy for the moment at least, which nothing in this world could give, or take away? And if the person whom you helped thanked you; if you felt that you had made that man your friend; that he trusted you now, looked on you now as a

brother — did not that double the pleasure? I ask you, is there any pleasure in the world like that of doing good, and being thanked for it? Then that is the joy of your Lord. That is the joy of Christ rising up in you, as often as you do good; the love which is in you rejoicing in itself, because it has found a loving thing to do, and has called out the love of a human being in return.

Yes, you will receive it, that is the joy of Christ — the glorious knowledge that he is doing endless good, and calling out endless love to himself and to the Father, till the day when he shall give up to his Father the kingdom which he has won back from sin and death, and God shall be all in all.

That is the joy of your Lord. If you wish for any different sort of joy after you die, you must not ask me to tell you of it; for I know nothing about the matter save what I find written in the Holy Scripture.

# THE BATTLE WITHIN.

"This I say then, Walk in the spirit, and ye shall not fulfil the lust of the flesh. For the flesh lusteth against the spirit, and the spirit against the flesh: and these are contrary the one to the other: so that ye cannot do the things that ye would." — *Gal.* v. 16, 17.

DOES this text seem to any of you difficult to understand? It need not be difficult to you; for it does not speak of anything which you do not know. It speaks of something which you have all felt, which goes on in you every day of your lives. It speaks of something, certainly, which is very curious, mysterious, difficult to put into words; but what is not curious and mysterious? The commonest things are usually the most curious? What is more wonderful than the beating of your heart; your pulse which beats all day long, without your thinking of it?

Just so this battle, this struggle, which St.

Paul speaks of in this text, is going on in us all day long, and yet we hardly think of it. Now what is this battle? What are these things which are fighting continually in your mind and in mine? St. Paul calls them the flesh and the spirit. "The flesh," he says, "lusts against the spirit, and the spirit against the flesh." They pull opposite ways. One wants to do one thing, and the other the other. But if so, one of them must be in the right, and the other in the wrong. Now, St. Paul says, when these two fall out with each other, the spirit is in the right, and the flesh in the wrong. And therefore, the secret of life is, to walk in the spirit, and so not to fulfil the lusts of the flesh.

But if so, it must be worth our while to find out which is flesh, and which is spirit in us, that we may know the foolish part of us from the wise. What the flesh is, we may see by looking at a dumb beast, which is all flesh, and has no immortal soul. It may be very cunning, brave, curiously formed, beautiful, but one thing you will always see, that a beast does what it likes, and only what it likes. And this is the mark of

the flesh, that it does what it likes. It is selfish and self-indulgent, cares for nothing but itself, and what it can get for itself.

True, you may raise a dumb beast above that, by taming and training it. You may teach a horse or dog to do what it does *not* like, and give it a sense of duty, and as it were awaken a soul in it. That is very wonderful, that we should be able to do so. It is a sign that man is made in God's likeness. But I cannot stay to speak of that now. I say our flesh, our animal nature, is selfish and self-indulgent. I do not say, therefore, that it is bad. God forbid. God made our bodies and brains, as well as our souls; and God makes nothing bad. It is blasphemous to say that he does. No, our bodies as bodies are good; the flesh as flesh is good, when it is in its right place; and its right place is to be servant, not master. We are not to walk after the flesh, says St. Paul; but the flesh is to walk after the spirit — in English, our bodies are to obey our spirits, our souls. For man has something higher than body in him. He has a spirit in him; and it is just having this

spirit which makes him a man. For this spirit cares about higher things than mere gain and comfort. It can feel pity and mercy, love and generosity, justice and honor; and when a man not only feels them, but obeys them, then he is a true man — a Christian man. But, on the other hand, if a man does not; if he be a man in whom there is no mercy or pity, no generosity, no benevolence, no justice or honor; who cares for nothing and no one but himself, and filling his own stomach and his own purse, and pleasing his own brute appetites in some way, what should you say of that man? You would say, he is like a brute beast — and you would say right — you would say just what St. Paul says. St. Paul would say, that man is fulfilling the lusts of the flesh; and you and St. Paul would mean just the same thing. Now, St. Paul says, "The flesh in us lusts against the spirit, and the spirit against the flesh." And what do we gain by the spirit in us lusting against the flesh, and pulling us the opposite way? We gain this, St. Paul says, "that we cannot do the things that we would."

Does that seem no great gain to you? Let me put it a little plainer. St. Paul means this, and just this, that you may not do whatever you like. St. Paul thought it the very best thing for a man not to be able to do whatever he liked. As long, St. Paul says, as a man does whatever he likes, he lives according to the flesh, and is no better than a dumb beast; but as soon as he begins to live according to the spirit, and does not do whatever he likes, but restrains himself, and keeps himself in order, then, and then only, he becomes a true man.

But why not do whatever we like? Because if we did do so, we should be certain to do wrong. I do not mean that you and I here like nothing but what is wrong. God forbid. I trust the Spirit of God is with our spirits. But I mean this: That if you could let a child grow up totally without any control whatsoever, I believe that before that lad was twenty-one he would have qualified himself for the gallows seven times over. Thank God, that cannot happen in England, because people are better taught, most of them at least; and more, we

dare not do what we like, for fear of the law and the policeman.

But, if you knew the lives which savages lead, who have neither law outside them to keep them straight by fear, nor the Spirit of God within them to keep them straight by duty and honor, then you would understand what I mean only too well.

Now St. Paul says, it is a good thing for a man not to be able to do what he likes. But there are two ways of keeping him from it. One is by the law, the other is by the Spirit of God. The law works on a man from the outside by fear; but the Spirit of God works in a man by honor, by the sense of duty, by making him like and love what is right, and making him see what a beautiful and noble thing right is.

Now St. Paul wants us to restrain ourselves, not from fear of being punished, but because we like to do right. That is what he means when he says that we are to be led by the Spirit, instead of being under the law. It is better to be afraid of the law than to do wrong; but it is best of all to do right from the Spirit, and of our own free will.

Am I puzzling you? I hope not; but, lest I should be, I will give you one single example which ought to make all clear as to the struggle between a man's flesh and his spirit, and also as to doing right from the Spirit or from law.

Suppose you were a soldier going to battle. You see your comrades falling around you, disfigured and cut up; you hear their groans and cries; and you are dreadfully afraid: and no shame to you. It is the common human instinct of self-preservation. The bravest men have told me that they are afraid at first going into action, and that they cannot get over the feeling. But what part of you is afraid? Your flesh, which is afraid of pain, just as a beast is of the whip. Then your flesh perhaps says, Run away — or at least skulk and hide — take care of yourself. But next, if you were a coward, the law would come into your mind, and you would say, But I dare not run away; for if I do, I shall be shot as a deserter, or broke, and drummed out of the army. So you may go on, even though you are a coward; but that is not courage. You have not conquered your own

fear — you have not conquered yourself — but the law has conquered you.

But, if you are a brave man, as I trust you all are, a higher spirit than your own speaks to your spirit, and makes you say to yourself, I dare not run away; but, more, I cannot run away. I should like to — but I cannot do the things that I would. It is my duty to go on; it is right; it is a point of honor with me to my country, my regiment, my Queen, my God, and I must go on.

Then you are walking in the Spirit. You have conquered yourself, and so are a really brave man. You have obeyed the Spirit, and you have your reward by feeling inspirited, as we say; you can face death with spirit, and fight with spirit.

But the struggle between the Spirit and the flesh is not ended there. When you got excited, there would probably come over you the lust of fighting; you would get angry, get mad and lose your self-possession.

There is the flesh waking up again, and saying, Be cruel, kill every one you meet. And to that

the Spirit answers, No, be reasonable and merciful. Do not fulfil the lusts of the flesh, and turn yourself into a raging wild beast. Your business is not to butcher human beings, but to win a battle.

Well, and even if you have conquered the enemy, you may not have conquered your worst enemy, which is yourself. For, after having fought bravely, and done your duty, what would the flesh say to you? I am sure it would say it to me. What but — Boast; talk of your own valiant deeds and successes; get all the praise and honor you can, and show how much finer a person you are than any of your comrades. But what would the Spirit say? — and I trust you would all listen to the Spirit. The Spirit would say, No; do not boast; do not lower yourself into the likeness of a vain peacock; but be just, and be modest. Give every man his due; try to praise and recommend every one whom you can; and trust to God to make your doing your duty as clear as the light, and your brave actions as the noonday.

So, you see, all through, a man's flesh might

be lusting, and would be lusting, against the Spirit, and the Spirit against the flesh; and see, too, how in each case, the flesh is tempting the man to be cowardly, brutal, vain, selfish, and wrong in some way, and the Spirit is striving to make him forget himself, and think of his comrades and his duty.

Now when a man is led by the Spirit, if he is tempted to do wrong, he does not say, I will not do this wrong thing, but I cannot. I cannot do what you want me. I like to hear a man say that. It is a sign that he feels God's voice in him, which he must obey, whether he likes or not; as Joseph said when he was tempted, not, I had rather not, or I dare not, but, How *can* I do this great wickedness against my master, who has trusted me, and put everything into my hand, and so, by being a treacherous traitor, sin against God?

Now, is this Spirit part of our spirits, or not? I think we confess ourselves that it is not. St. Paul says that it is not. For he says, there is one Spirit — that is, one good Spirit — of whom he speaks as the Spirit; and this, he says, is the

Spirit of God, and the Spirit of Christ, and the Spirit which inspires the spirits of all noble, Christ-like, God-like men.

In this Spirit there is nothing proud, spiteful, cruel; nothing selfish, false, and mean; nothing violent, loose, debauched. But he is an altogether good and noble spirit, whose fruit is love, joy, peace, longsuffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, meekness, temperance. This, he says, is the Spirit of God; and this Spirit he gives to those spirits,— souls, as we call them now,— who desire it, that they may become righteous with the righteousness of Christ, and good with the goodness of God.

And is not this good news? I say, my friends, if we will look at it aright, there is no better news, no more inspiriting news for men like us, mixed up in the battle of life, and often pulled downward by our own bad passions, and ashamed of ourselves, more or less, every day of our lives, — no better news, I say, than this, that what is good and right in us is not our own, but God's; that our longings after good, our sense of duty and honor, kindliness and charity, are not merely

our own likings or fancies, but the voice of God's almighty and everlasting Spirit. Good news, indeed! For if God be for us, who can be against us? If God's Spirit be with our spirits, they must surely be stronger than our selfish pleasure-loving flesh. If God himself be laboring to make us good, if he be putting into our hearts good desires, surely he can enable us to bring those desires to good effect, and all that is wanted of us is to listen to God's voice within, and do the right like men, whatever pain it may cost us, sure that we, by God's help, shall win at last in the hardest battle of all battles, the victory over our own selves.

# TRUE REPENTANCE.

"When the wicked man turneth away from his wickedness which he hath committed, and doeth that which is lawful and right, he shall save his soul alive."— *Ezek.* xviii. 27.

WE hear a great deal about repentance, and how necessary it is for a man to repent of his sins; for unless a man repent, he cannot be forgiven. But do we all of us really know what repentance means?

I sometimes fear not. I sometimes fear, that though this text stands at the opening of the Church service, and though people hear it as often as any text in the whole Bible, yet they have not really learned the lesson which God sends them by it.

What, then, does repentance mean?

"Being sorry for what we have done wrong," say some.

But is that all? I suppose there are few

wicked things done upon earth, for which the doers of them are not sorry, sooner or later. A man does a wrong thing, and his conscience pricks him, and makes him uneasy, and he says in his heart, "I wish after all I had left that alone." But the next time he is tempted to do the same thing, he does it, and is ashamed of himself afterwards again; but that is not repentance. I suppose that there have been few murders committed in the world, after which sooner or later the murderer did not say in his heart—,'Ah, that that man were alive and well again!" But that is not repentance.

For aught I can tell the very Devil is sorry for his sin; discontented, angry with himself, ashamed of himself for being a devil. He may be so to all eternity, and yet never repent. For the dark, uneasy feeling which comes over every man sooner or later, after doing wrong, is not repentance; it is remorse; the most horrible and miserable of all feelings, when it comes upon a man in its full strength; the feeling of hating one's self, being at war with one's self, and with all the world, and with God who made it.

But that will save no man's soul alive. Repentance will save any and every soul alive, then and there; but remorse will not. Remorse may only kill him. Kill his body, by making him, as many a poor creature has done, put an end to himself in sheer despair; and kill his soul at least, by making him say in his heart, "Well, if bad I am, bad I must be. I hate myself, and God hates me also. All I can do is, to forget my unhappiness if I can, in business, in pleasure, in drink, and drive remorse out of my head"; and often a man succeeds in so doing. The first time he does a wrong thing, he feels sorry and ashamed after it. Then he takes courage after awhile and does it again, and feels less sorrow and shame; and so again and again, till the sin becomes easier and easier to him, and his conscience grows more and more dull; till at last, perhaps, the feeling of its being wrong dies within—and that is the death of his soul.

But of true repentance, it is written, that he who repents shall save his soul *alive*. And how?

The word for repentance in Scripture means

simply a change of mind. To change one's mind is, in Scripture words, to repent.

Now, if a man changes his mind, he changes his conduct also. If you set out to go to a place and change your mind, then you do not go there. If, as you go on, you begin to have doubts about its being right to go, or to be sorry that you are going, and still walk on in the same road, however slowly or unwillingly, that is not changing your mind about going. If you do change your mind you will change your steps. You will turn back, or turn off, and go some other road.

This may seem too simple to talk of. But if it be, why do not people act upon it? If a man finds that in his way through life he is on the wrong road, the road which leads to shame, and sorrow, and death and hell, why will he confess that he is on the wrong road, and say that he is on the wrong road, and say that he is very sorry (as perhaps he really may be) that he is going wrong, and yet go on, and persevere on the wrong path? At least, as long as he keeps on the road which leads to ruin, he has not

changed his mind, or repented at all. He may find the road unpleasant, full of thorns, and briars, and pit-falls; for, believe me, however broad the road is which leads to destruction, it is only the *gate* of it which is easy and comfortable; it soon gets darker and rougher, that road of sin; and the further you walk along it the uglier and more wretched a road it is: but all the misery which it gives to a man is only useless remorse, unless he fairly repents, and turns out of that road into the path which leads to life.

Now the one great business of foolish man in all times has been to save his soul (as he calls it) without doing right; to go to heaven (as he calls it) without walking the road which leads to heaven. It is a folly and a dream. For no man can get to heaven unless he be heavenly; and being heavenly is simply being good, and neither more nor less. And sin is death, and no man can save his soul alive, while it is dead in sin. Still men have been trying to do it in all ages and countries; and as soon as one plan has failed, they have tried some new one; and

have invented some false repentance which was to serve instead of the true one. The old Jews seem to have thought that the repentance which God required was burnt-offerings and sacrifices; that if they could only offer bullocks and goats enough on God's altar, he would forgive them their sins. But David, and Isaiah after him, and Ezekiel after him, found out that *that* was but a dream; that that sort of repentance would save no man's soul; that God did not require burnt-offerings and sacrifices for sin, but simply that a man should do right and not wrong. "When ye come before me," saith the Lord, "who has required this at your hand, to tread my courts?" They were to bring no more vain offerings, but to put away the evil of their doings; to cease to do evil, to learn to do well; to seek justice, relieve the oppressed, judge the fatherless, plead for the widow; and then, and then only, though their sins were as scarlet, they should be white as snow. For God would take them for what they were — as good, if they were good; as bad, if they were bad. And this agrees exactly with the text. "When the

wicked man turneth away from his wickedness which he hath committed, and doeth that which is lawful and right, he shall save his soul alive."

The Papists, again, thought that the repentance which God required was for a man to punish himself bitterly for his sins; to starve and torture himself, to give up all that makes life pleasant, and so to atone. And good and pious men and women, with a real hatred and horror of sin, tried this; but they found that making themselves miserable took away their sins no more than burnt-offerings and sacrifices would do it. Their consciences were not relieved; they gained no feeling of comfort, no assurance of God's love. Then they said, "I have not punished myself enough. I have not made myself miserable enough. I will try whether more torture and misery will not wipe out my sins." And so they tried again, and failed again, and then tried harder still, till many a noble man and woman in old times killed themselves piecemeal by slow torments, in trying to atone for their sins, and wash out in their own blood what was already washed out in the

blood of Jesus Christ. But, on the whole, that was found to be a failure. And now the great mass of the Papists have fallen back on the wretched notion that repentance merely means confessing their sins to a priest, and receiving absolution from him, and doing some little penance too childish to speak of here.

But is there no false repentance among us English, too, my friends? No paltry substitute for the only true repentance which God will accept, which is, turning round and doing right? How many there are, who feel — "I am very wrong. I am very sinful. I am on the road to hell. I am quarrelling and losing my temper, and using bad language." Or — "I am cheating my neighbor." Or — "I am living in adultery and drunkenness. I must repent before it is too late." But what do they mean by repenting? Coming as often as they can to church or chapel, and reading all the religious books which they can get hold of; till they come, from often reading and hearing about the Gospel promises, to some confused notion that their sins are washed away in Christ's blood; or, perhaps, on the strength

of some violent feelings, believe that they are converted all on a sudden, and clothed with the robe of Christ's righteousness, and renewed by God's Spirit, and that now they belong to the number of believers, and are among God's elect.

Now, my dear friends, I complain of no one going to hear all the good they can; I complain of no one reading all the religious books they can: but I think — and more, I know — that hearing sermons and reading tracts may be, and is often, turned into a complete snare of the devil by people who do not wish to give up their sins and do right, but only want to be comfortable in their sins.

Hear sermons if you will; read good books if you will: but bear in mind, that you know already quite enough to lead you to *repentance*. You need neither book nor sermon to teach you those ten commandments which hang here over the communion table; all that books and tracts and sermons can do is to teach you how to *keep* those commandments in spirit and in truth; but I am sure I have seen people read

books, and run about to sermons, in order to enable them to forget those ten commandments; in order to find excuses for not keeping them, and to find doctrines which tell them, that because Christ has done all, they need do nothing, — only *feel* a little thankfulness, and a little sorrow, for sin, and a little liking to hear about religion; and call that repentance, and conversion, and the renewal of the Holy Spirit.

Now, my dear friends, let me ask you, as reasonable beings, Do you think that hearing me or any man preach can save your souls alive? Do you think that sitting over a book for an hour a day, or all day long, will save your souls alive? Do you think that your sins are washed away in Christ's blood, when they are there still, and you are committing them? Would they be there, and you doing them, if they were put away? Do you think that your sins can be put away out of God's sight, if they are not even put out of your own sight? If you are doing wrong, do you think that God will treat you as if you were doing right? Cannot God see in you what you see in yourselves?

Do you think a man can be clothed in Christ's righteousness at the very same time that he is clothed in his own unrighteousness? Can he be good and bad at once? Do you think a man can be converted — that is, turned round — when he is going on his old road the whole week? Do you think that a man has repented — that is, changed his mind — when he is in just the same mind as ever as to how he shall behave to his family, his customers, and everybody with whom he has to do? Do you think that a man is renewed by God's Spirit, when except for a few religious phrases, and a little more outside respectability, he is just the old man, the same character at heart he ever was? Do you think that there is any use in a man's belonging to the number of believers, if he does not do what he believes; or any use in thinking that God has elected and chosen him, when he chooses not to do what God has chosen that every man must do, or die?

Be not deceived. God is not mocked. What a man sows, that shall he reap. Let no man deceive you. He that doeth righteousness is

righteous, even as Christ is righteous, and no one else.

He who tries to do as Christ did, and he only, has Christ's righteousness imputed to him, because he is trying to do what Christ did, that which is lawful and right. He who does righteousness, and he only, has truly repented, changed his mind about what he should do, and turned away from his wickedness which he has committed, and is now doing that which is lawful and right. He who does righteousness, and he only, shall save his soul alive: not by feeling this thing, or believing about that thing, but by doing that which is lawful and right.

We must face it, my dear friends. We cannot deceive God; and God will certainly not deceive himself. He sees us as we are, and takes us for what we are. What is right in us, he accepts for the salvation of Jesus Christ, in whom we are created unto good works. What is wrong in us, he will assuredly punish, and give us the exact reward of the deeds done in the body, whether they be good or evil. Every work of ours shall come into judgment, unless it be

repented of, and put away by the only true repentance — not doing the thing any more.

God, I say, will judge righteous judgment, and take us as we are.

For the sake of Jesus the Lamb, slain from the foundation of the world, there is full, free, and perfect forgiveness for every sin, when we give it up. As soon as a man turns round, and, instead of doing wrong, tries to do right, he need be under no manner of fear or terror any more. He is taken back into his Father's house as freely and graciously as the prodigal son in the parable was. Whatsoever dark score there was against him in God's books is wiped out there and then, and he starts clear, a new man, with a fresh chance of life. And whosoever tells him that the score is not wiped out, lies, and contradicts flatly God's holy word. But as long as a man does *not* give up his sins, the dark score *does* stand against him in Gods book's; and no praying, or reading, or devoutness of any kind will wipe it out; and as long as he sins, he is still in his sins, and his sins will be his ruin. Whosoever tells him that they are wiped out,

he too lies, and contradicts flatly God's holy word.

For God is just and true ; and therefore God takes us for what we are, and will do so to all eternity; and you will find it so, my dearest friends. In spite of all doctrines which men have invented, and then pretended to find in the Bible, to drug men's consciences and confuse God's clear light in their hearts, you will find, now and forever, that if you do right you will be happy even in the midst of sorrow; if you do wrong, you will be miserable even in the midst of pleasure. Oh, believe this, my dear friends, and do not rashly count on some sudden magical change happening to you as soon as you die, to make you fit for heaven. There is not one word in the Bible which gives us reason to suppose that we shall not be in the next world the same persons which we have made ourselves in this world. If we are unjust here, we shall, for aught we know, or can know, try to be unjust there; if we be filthy here, we shall be so there; if we be proud here, we shall be so there; if we be selfish here, we shall be

so there. What we sow here, we shall reap there. And it is good for us to know this, and face this. Anything is good for us, however unpleasant it may be, which drives us from the only real misery, which is sin and selfishness, to the only true happiness, which is the everlasting life of Christ; a pure, loving, just, generous, useful life of goodness, which is the righteousness of Christ and the glory of Christ, and which will be our righteousness and our glory also forever: but only if we live it; only if we be useful as Christ was, generous as Christ was, just as Christ was, gentle as Christ was, pure as Christ was, loving as Christ was, and so put on Christ, not in name and in word, but in spirit and in truth, that having worn Christ's likeness in this world, we may share his victory over all evil in the life to come.

# THE ETERNAL MANHOOD.

"Jesus saith unto him, Thomas, because thou hast seen me, thou hast believed; blessed are they that have not seen, and yet have believed."—*John* xx. 29.

ON the eighth day after the Lord Jesus rose from the dead, he appeared a second time to his disciples. On this day he strengthened St. Thomas's weak faith, by giving him proof, sensible proof, that he was indeed and really the very same person who had been crucified, wearing the very same human nature, the very same man's body.

"Blessed are they who have not seen, and yet have believed." You have not seen. You have never beheld with your bodily eyes, or touched with your bodily hand, as St. Thomas did, the Lord Jesus Christ. And yet you may be more blessed now, this day, than St. Thomas was then. We are too apt to fancy, that, to have seen the

Lord with our eyes, to have walked with him and talked with him, as the apostles did, was the greatest honor and blessing which could happen to man. We fancy, perhaps, at times, that if the Lord Jesus were to come visibly among us now, we should want nothing more to make us good; that we could not help listening to him, obeying him, loving him.

But the Scriptures prove to us that it was not so. The Scribes and Pharisees saw him and talked with him; yet they hated him. Judas Iscariot, yet he betrayed him. Pilate, yet he condemned him. The word preached profited them nothing, not being mixed with faith in those who heard him. Jesus Christ, the Lord of glory, came and preached himself to them; declared to them who he was, proved who he was by his mighty works of love and mercy, and by fulfilling all the prophecies of Scripture which spoke of him; and yet they did not believe him, they hated him, they crucified him; because they had no faith.

You see, therefore, that something more than seeing him with our bodily eyes is wanted to

make us believe in the Lord Jesus Christ; something more than seeing him with our bodily eyes is wanted to make us blessed. St. Thomas saw him; St. Thomas was allowed, by the boundless condescension and mercy of the Lord Jesus, to put his hand into his side. And yet the Lord does not say to him, — See how blessed thou art; see how honored thou art, by being allowed to touch me. No; our Lord rather rebukes him for requiring such a proof.

There are those who will not believe without seeing; who say, I must have proof. What I hear in church is too much for me to believe without many more reasons than are given for it all. Many people, for instance, stumble at the stumbling-block of the cross, and cannot bring themselves to believe that God would condescend to suffer and to die for men. Others cannot make up their minds about the resurrection. It seems to them a strange and impossible thing that Jesus' body should have risen from the grave and ascended to heaven, and that our bodies should rise also. That was the great puzzle to the Greeks, who thought themselves very

learned and cunning, and were great arguers and disputers about all deep matters in heaven and earth. When St. Paul preached to them on Mars' Hill, they heard him patiently enough till he spoke of Jesus rising from the dead; and then they mocked; laughed at the notion as absurd. And we find that the Corinthians, even after they were converted and baptized Christians, were puzzled about this same matter. They could not understand how the dead were raised, and with what body they would come.

With such the Lord is not angry. If they really wish to know what is true, and to do what is right; if they really are, as St. Paul says, "feeling after the Lord, if haply they may find him," then the Lord will give them light in due time, and show them what they ought to believe, and give them the sort of proof which they want. All such he treats as he did Thomas, when he said, in his great condescension, "Reach hither thy finger, and behold my hands, and reach hither thy hand, and thrust it into my side, and be not faithless but believing."

So the Lord sent to those Corinthians the very

sort of proof which they wanted, by the hand of the learned apostle, St. Paul. They were great observers of the works of nature, of the strange movement and change, birth and death, which goes on in beasts, and in plants, and in the clouds, and the rivers, and the very stones under our feet. And they said, We cannot believe in the resurrection of the dead, because we see nothing like it in the world around us. And St. Paul was sent to tell them. No: you do see something like it. If you will look deeper into the working of the world around you, you will see that the rising again of the dead, instead of being an unnatural or an absurd thing, is the most reasonable and natural thing, the perfect fulfilment, and crowning wonder of wonderful laws which are working round you in every seed which you sow; in the flesh of beasts and fishes; in bodies celestial and bodies terrestrial; and so in that glorious chapter which we read in the Burial Service, St. Paul tells the Corinthians, who went altogether by sense and reasoning about the things which they could see and handle, that sense and reasoning were on his

side, on God's side; and that the mysteries of faith, like the resurrection of the body, were not contrary to reason, but agreed with it.

So does the Lord clear up the doubts of his people in the way which is best for them. But he does not call them as blessed as others. There is a higher faith than that. There is a better part. The same part which Mary chose. The same faith of which our Lord says, — "Blessed are they who have not seen, and yet have believed." The faith of the heart; the child-like, undoubting, ready, willing faith, which welcomes the news of the Lord; which runs to meet it, and is not astonished at it; and, if it ever doubts for a moment, only doubts for very joy and delight; and feeling that the news of the gospel is good news, cannot help feeling now and then that it is too good news to be true; showing its love and its faith in its very hesitation. This is the childlike heart, whereof it is written, "Except ye be converted and become as little children, ye shall in no wise enter into the kingdom of heaven."

The hearts of little children; the hearts which

begin by faith and love toward God himself; the hearts which know God; the hearts to whom God has revealed himself, and taught them, they know not how, that he is love. They are so sure of God's goodness, so sure of his power, so sure of his love, his willingness to have mercy and to deliver poor creatures, that they find nothing strange, nothing difficult, in the mysteries of faith. To them it is not a thing incredible that God should have come down and died upon the cross. When they hear the good news of him who gave his own life for them, it seems a natural thing to them, a reasonable thing; not of course a thing which they could have expected, but yet not a thing to doubt of or to be astonished at. For they knew that God is love.

And now some of you may say, Then are we more blessed than Thomas? We have not seen, and yet we have believed. We never doubted. We never wanted any arguments, or learned books, or special inward assurances. From the moment that we began to learn our catechisms at school we believed it, of course, every word of it. Do we not say the Creed

every Sunday;—"I believe in," and so forth? O my friends, do you believe indeed? If you do, blessed are you. But are you sure that you speak truth?

You may believe it. But do you believe in it? Have you faith in it? Do you put your trust in it? Is your heart in it? Is it in your heart? Do you love it, rejoice in it, delight to think over it, to look forward to it, to make yourselves ready and fit for it? Do you believe in it, in short, or do you only believe it as you believe that there is an Emperor of China, or that there is a country called America, or any other matter with which you have nothing to do, for which you care nothing, and which would make no difference at all to you, if you found out to-morrow that it was not so. That is mere dead belief; faith without works, which is dead, the belief of the brains, not the faith of the heart and spirit.

Oh, do you really believe the good news of this text, in which the Son of God himself said to mortal men like ourselves, "Handle me and see that it is I, indeed; for a spirit hath

not flesh and bones as ye see me have." Do you believe that there is a Man evermore on the right hand of God? That now as we speak a Man is offering up before the Father his perfect and all-cleansing sacrifice? That, in the midst of the throne of God, is he himself who was born of the Virgin Mary and crucified under Pontius Pilate? Do you wish to find out whether you believe that or not? Then look at your own hearts. Look at your own prayers. Do you think of the Lord Jesus Christ, do you pray to the Lord Jesus Christ, as a man, very man, born of woman? Do you pray to him as to one who can be touched with the feeling of your infirmities, because he has been tempted in all things like as you are, yet without sin? When you are sad, perplexed, do you take all your sorrows and doubts and troubles to the Lord Jesus, and speak them all out to him honestly and frankly, however reverently, as a man speaketh to his friend? Do you really cast all your care on him, because you believe that he careth for you? If you do, then indeed you believe in the resurrection of the

Lord Jesus Christ; and you will surely have your reward in a peace of mind, amid all the chances and changes of this mortal life, which passes man's understanding. That blessed knowledge that the Lord knows all, cares for all, condescends to all — that thought of a loving human face smiling upon your joys, sorrowing over your sorrows, watching you, educating you from youth to manhood, from manhood to the grave, from the grave to eternities of eternities — whosoever has felt that has indeed found the pearl of great price, for which, if need be, he would give up all else in earth or heaven.

Or do you say to yourselves at times, I must not think too much about the Lord Jesus' being man, lest I should forget that he is God? Do you shrink from opening your heart to him? Do you say within yourself, He is too great, too awful, to condescend to listen to my little mean troubles and anxieties? Besides, how can I expect him to feel for them—I, a mean, sinful man, and he the Almighty God? How do I know that he will not despise my meanness

and paltriness? How do I know that he will not be angry with me? I must be more reverent to him than to trouble him with very petty matters. He was a man once when he was upon earth: but now that he is ascended up on high, Very God of Very God, in the glory which he had with the Father before the worlds were made, I must have more awful and solemn thoughts about him, and keep at a more humble distance from him.

Do you ever have such thoughts as those come over you, my friends, when you are thinking of the Lord Jesus, and praying to him? If you do, shall I tell you what to say to them when they arise in your minds? "Get thee behind me, Satan." Get thee away, thou accusing devil, who art accusing my Lord to me, and trying to make me fancy him less loving, less condescending, less tender, less understanding, than he was when he wept over the grave of Lazarus. Get thee away, thou lying hypocritical devil, who pretendest to be so very humble and reverent to the godhead of the Lord Jesus, in order that thou mayest make

me forget what his godhead is like, forget what God's likeness is, forget that it was in his manhood, in his man's words, his man's thoughts, his man's actions, that he showed forth the glory of God, the express image of his person, and fulfilled the blessed words, "And God said, Let us make man in our image, after our likeness." Get thee behind me, Satan. I believe in the good news of Easter Day, and thou shalt not rob me of it. I believe that he who died upon the cross rose again the third day, as very and perfect man then and now, as he was when he bled and groaned on Calvary, and shuddered at the fear of death, in the garden of Gethsemane. Thou shalt not make my Lord's incarnation, his birth, his passion, his resurrection, all that he did and suffered in those thirty-three years, of none effect to me. Thou shalt not take from me the blessed message of my Bible, that there is a man in heaven in the midst of the throne of God. Thou shalt not take from me the blessed message of the Athanasian Creed, that in Christ the manhood is taken into God. Thou shalt not take from me

the blessed message of Holy Communion, which declares that the very human flesh and blood of him who died on the cross is now eternal in the heavens, and nourishes my body and soul to everlasting life. Thou shalt not, under pretence of voluntary humility and will-worship, tempt me to go and pray to angels or to saints, or to the Blessed Virgin, because I choose to fancy them more tender and condescending, more loving, more human, than the Lord himself, who gave himself to death for me. If the Lord God, the Son of the Father, is not ashamed to be man forever and ever, I will not be ashamed to think of him as man; to pray to him as man; to believe and be sure that he can be touched with the feeling of my infirmities; to entreat him, by all that he did and suffered as a man, to deliver me from those temptations which he himself has conquered for himself; and to cry to him in the smallest as well as in the most important matters — "By the mystery of thy holy incarnation; by thine agony and bloody sweat; by thy cross and passion; by thy precious death

and burial; by thy glorious resurrection and ascension"; by all which thou hast done, and suffered, and conquered, as a man upon this earth of ours, good Lord, deliver us!

# HYPOCRISY.

"Oh ye hypocrites, ye can discern the face of the sky; but can ye not discern the signs of the times?" *Matt.* xvi. 3.

IT will need, I think, some careful thought thoroughly to understand this text. Our Lord in it calls the Pharisees and Sadducees hypocrites; because, though they could use their common sense and experience to judge of the weather, they would not use them to judge of the signs of the times; of what was going to happen to the Jewish nation.

But how was their conduct hypocritical? Stupid, we might call it, or unreasonable; but how hypocritical? That, I think, we may see better, by considering what the word hypocrite means.

We mean now, generally, by a hypocrite, a man who pretends to be one thing, while he is another; who pretends to be pious and good, while he is leading a profligate life in secret; who pretends to believe certain doctrines, while

at heart he disbelieves them; a man, in short who is a scoundrel, *and knows it*, but who does not intend others to know it; who deceives others, but does not deceive himself.

My friends, such a man is a hypocrite; but there is another kind of hypocrite, and a more common one by far; and that is, the hypocrite who not only deceives others, but deceives himself likewise; the hypocrite who (as one of the wisest living men puts it) is astonished that you should think him hypocritical.

I do not say which of these two kinds is the worse. My duty is to judge no man. I only say that there are such people, and too many of them; that we ourselves are often in danger of becoming such hypocrites; and that this was the sort of people which the Pharisees for the most part were. Hypocrites who had not only deceived others, but themselves also; who thought themselves perfectly right, honest, and pious; who were therefore astonished and indignant at Christ's calling them hypocrites.

How did they get into this strange state of mind? How may we get into it?

Consider first what a hypocrite means. It means strictly neither more nor less than a play-actor; one who personates different characters on the stage. That is the one original meaning of the word hypocrite.

Now recollect that a man may personate characters, like a play-actor, and pretend to be what he is not, for two different objects. He may do it for other people's sake, or for his own.

1. For other people's sake. As the Pharisees did, when they did all their works to be seen of men; and therefore, naturally, gave their attention as much as possible to outward forms and ceremonies, which could be seen by men.

Now, understand me, before I go a step further, I am not going to speak against forms and ceremonies. No man less; and above all, not against the Church forms and ceremonies, which have grown up, gradually and naturally, out of the piety, and experience, and practical common sense of many generations of God's saints. Men must have forms and ceremonies to put them in

mind of the spiritual truths which they cannot see or handle. Men cannot get on without them; and those who throw away the Church forms have to invent fresh ones, and less good ones, for themselves.

All, I say, have their forms and ceremonies; and all are in danger, as we churchmen are, of making those forms stand instead of true religion. In the Church or out of the Church, men are all tempted to have, like the Pharisees, their traditions of the elders, their little rules as to conduct over and above what the Bible and Prayer Book have commanded; and all are tempted to be more shocked if those rules are broken, than if really wrong and wicked things are done; and like the Pharisees of old, to be careful of paying tithe of mint, anise, and cummin, the commonest garden herbs, and yet forget the weighty matters of the law, justice, mercy, and judgment. I have known those who would be really more shocked at seeing a religious man dance or sing, than at hearing him tell a lie. But I will give no examples, lest I should set you on judging others. Or, rather, the only

example which I will give is that of these Pharisees, who have become, by our Lord's words about them, famous to all time as hypocrites.

Now you must bear in mind that these Pharisees were not villains and profligates. Many people, feeling, perhaps, how much of what the Lord had said against the Pharisees would apply to them, have tried to escape from that ugly thought by making out the Pharisees worse men than our Lord does. But the fact is that they cannot be proved to be worse than too many religious people nowadays. There were adulterers, secret loose-livers among them. Are there none nowadays? They were covetous. Are no religious professors covetous nowadays? They crept into widow's houses and for a pretence made long prayers. Does no one do so now? There would, of course, be among them, as there is among all large religious parties, as there is now, a great deal of inconsistent and bad conduct. But, on the whole, there is no reason to suppose that the greater number of them were what we should call ill-livers. In that terrible twenty-third chapter of St. Mat-

thew, in which our Lord denounces the sins of the Scribes and Pharisees, he nowhere accuses them of profligate living; and the Pharisee of whom he tells us in his parable, who went into the Temple to pray, no doubt spoke truth when he boasted of not being as other men are, extortioners, unjust, adulterers. He trusted in himself that he was righteous. True. But whatever that means, it means that he thought that he was righteous, after a fashion, though it proved to be a wrong one. What our Lord complains of in them is, first, their hardness of heart; their pride in themselves, and their contempt for their fellow men. Their very name, Pharisee, meant that. It meant separate — they were separate from mankind; a peculiar people; who alone knew the law, with whom alone God was pleased, while the rest of mankind, even of their own countrymen, knew not the law, and were accursed, and doomed to hell. Ah, God, who are we to cast stones at the Pharisees of old, when this is the very thing which you may hear said in England from hundreds of pulpits every Sunday, with the mere difference, that in-

stead of the word law, men put the word gospel.

For this our Lord denounced them; and next for their hypocrisy, their play-acting, the outward show of religion in which they delighted; trying to dress, and look, and behave differently from other men; doing all their good works to be seen of men; sounding a trumpet before them when they gave away alms; praying standing at the corners of the streets; going in long clothing, making broad their phylacteries, the written texts of Scripture which they sewed to their garments; washing perpetually when they came from the market, or any public place, lest they should have been defiled by the touch of an unclean thing, or person; loving the chief seats in their religious meetings, and the highest places at feasts; and so forth, — full of affectation, vanity, and pride.

I could tell you other stories of their ridiculous affectations, but I shall not. They would only make you smile, and we could not judge them fairly, not being able to make full allowance for the difference of customs between the

Jews and ourselves. Many of the things which our Lord blames them for were not nearly so absurd in Judea of old, as they seem to us in England now. Indeed, no one but our Lord seems to have thought them absurd, or seen through the hollowness and emptiness of them as he perhaps sees through, my friends, a great deal which is thought very right in England now. Making allowance for the difference of the country and of the times, the Pharisees were perhaps no more affected, for Jews, than many people are now, for Englishmen. And if it be answered, that though our religious fashions nowadays are not commanded expressly by the Bible or the Prayer Book, yet they carry out their spirit; remember, in God's name, that that was exactly what the Pharisees said, and their excuse for being righteous above what was written; and that they could, and did, quote texts of Scripture for their phylacteries, their washings, and all their other affectations.

Another reason I have for not dwelling too much on these affectations, and it is this: Because a man may be a play-actor and a self-de-

ceiver in religion, without any of these tricks at all, and without much of the vanity and pride which cause them. For recollect that a man may act for his own amusement as well as for other people's. Children do so perpetually, and especially when no one is by to listen to them. They delight in playing at being this person and that, and in living for a while in a day dream. Oh let us take care that we do not do the same in our religion! It is but too easy to do so; too easy, and too common. For is it not play-acting, like any child, to come to this church, and here to feel repentance, feel forgiveness, feel gratitude, feel reverence; and then to go out of church and awake as from a dream, and become our natural selves for the rest of the week, till Sunday comes around again, comforting ourselves meanwhile with the fancy that we had been very religious last Sunday, and intended to be very religious next Sunday likewise? Would there not be hypocrisy and play-acting in that, my friends?

Now, my dear friends, if we give way to this sort of hypocrisy, we shall get, as too many do,

into the habit of living two lives at once, without knowing it. Outside us will be our religious life of praying, and reading, and talking of good things, and doing good work (as, thank God, many do whose hearts are not altogether right with God, or their eyes single in his sight) good work, which I trust God will not forget in the last day, in spite of all our inconsistencies. Outside us, I say, will be our religious life; and inside us our own actual life, our own natural character, too often very little changed or improved at all. So by continually playing at religion, we shall deceive ourselves. We shall make an entirely wrong estimate of the state of our souls. We shall fancy that this outward religion of ours is the state of our soul. And then, if any one tells us that we are play-acting, and hypocrites, we shall be as astonished and indignant as the Pharisees were of old. We shall make the same mistake as a man would who, because he always wore clothes, should fancy at last that his clothes were himself, part of his own body. So, I say, many deceive themselves, and are more or less hypocrites to them-

selves. They do not, in general, deceive others; they are not, on the whole, hypocrites to their neighbors. For their neighbors, after a time, see what they cannot see themselves, that they are play-acting; that they are two different people without knowing it; that their religion is a thing apart from their real character. A hundred signs show that. How many there are, for instance, who are, or seem, tolerably earnest about religion, and doing good, as long as they are actually in church, or actually talking about religion. But all the rest of their time, what are they doing? What are they thinking of? Mere frivolity and empty amusement. Idle butterflies, pretending to be industrious bees once in the week.

Others, again, will be gentle and generous enough about everything but religion, and as soon as they get upon that will become fierce, and hard, and narrow at once. Others again (and this is most common), commit the very same fault as the Pharisees in the text, who could use their common sense to discern the signs of the weather, and yet could not use it to

discern the signs of the time, because they were afraid of looking honestly at the true state of public feeling and conscience, and at the danger and ruin into which their religion and their party were sinking. For about all worldly matters these men will be as sound-headed and reasonable as they need be; but as soon as they get on religious matters, they become utterly silly and unreasonable, and will talk nonsense, listen to nonsense, and be satisfied with nonsense, such as they would not endure a moment if their own worldly interest or worldly character were in question.

But most of all do these poor souls not deceive their neighbors when a time of temptation comes upon them. For then, alas! it comes out too often that they are of those whom our Lord spoke of, who heard the word gladly, but had no root in themselves, and in time of temptation fell away. For then, before the storm of some trying temptation, away goes all the play-acting religion, and the man's true self rises up from underneath into ugly life. Up rise, perhaps, pride, and self-will, and passion; up rise,

perhaps, meanness and love of money; up rise, perhaps, cowardice and falsehood; or up rises foul and gross sin, causing some horrible scandal to religion and to the name of Christ; while fools look on, and, laughing an evil laugh, cry, "These are your high professors. These are your Pharisees, who were so much better than everybody else. When they are really tried, it seems they behave no better than we sinners."

Oh, these are the things which make a clergyman's heart truly sad. These are the things which make him long that all were over; that Christ would shortly accomplish the number of his elect, and hasten his kingdom, that we, with all those who are departed in the true faith of his holy name, may rest in peace forever from sin and sinners.

Not that I mean that some of these very people, in spite of all their inconsistency, will not be among that number. God forbid! How do we know that? How do we know that they are one whit worse than we should be in their place? How do we know, above all, that to

have been found out may not be the very best thing that has happened to them since the day that they were born? How do we know that it may not be God's gracious medicine to enable them to find themselves out; to make them see themselves in their true colors; to purge them of all their play-acting, and begin all over again, crying to God, not with the lips only, but out of the depth of an honest and a noble shame, as David did of old — Behold I was shapen in wickedness, conceived in sin, and I have found it out at last. But thou requirest truth in the inward parts, in the very root and ground of the heart, and not merely truth in the head, in the lips, and in the outward behavior. Make me a clean heart, O God, and renew a right spirit within me. Thou desirest no sacrifice, else would I give it thee; but thou delightest not in burnt-offerings. The sacrifice of God is a broken spirit, as mine is now. A broken and a contrite heart, ground down by the shame of its own sin, that, O God, thou wilt not despise.

And then — when that prayer has gone up

in earnest, and has been answered by the gift of a clean heart and of a right spirit, which desires nothing but to be made clean and made right, to learn its duty and to do it — then, I say, that man may go back safely and freely to such forms and ceremonies as he has been accustomed to, and have been consecrated by the piety and wisdom of his forefathers. For, says David, though forms and ceremonies, sacrifice and burnt-offering cannot make any peace with God, yet I am not going to give up forms and ceremonies, sacrifice and burnt-offerings. No; when my peace is made, when the broken and the contrite heart has put me in my true place again, and my heart is clean, and my spirit right once more, then, he says, will God be pleased with my sacrifices, with my burnt-offerings and oblations; because they will be the sacrifice of righteousness, of a righteous man desiring to show honor to that God from whom his righteousness comes, and gratitude to that God to whom he owes his pardon.

And so with us, my friends, if ever we have fallen, and been pardoned, and risen again to a new, a truer, a more honest, a more righteous

life. Our forms of devotion ought then to become not a snare and a hypocrisy, but honest outward signs of the spiritual grace which is within us; as honest and as rational as the shake of the hand to the friend whom we truly love, as the bowing of the knee before the Queen for whom we would gladly die.

O may God give us all grace to seek first the kingdom of God and his righteousness. To seek first the kingdom of God; to work earnestly, each in his place, to do God's will, and to teach and help others to do it likewise. To seek his righteousness, which is the righteousness of the heart and spirit; and then all other things will be added to us. All outward forms and ceremonies, ways of speaking, ways of behaving, which are good and right for us, will come to us as a matter of course; growing up in us naturally and honestly, without any affectation or hypocrisy, and the purity and soberness, the reverence and earnestness, of our outward conversation, will be a pattern of the purity and soberness, the reverence and earnestness, which dwells in our hearts by the inspiration of the Holy Spirit of God.

# THE WAGES OF SIN.

"What fruit had ye then in those things whereof ye are now ashamed? for the end of those things is death. But now being made free from sin, and become servants to God, ye have your fruit unto holiness, and the end everlasting life. For the wages of sin is death; but the gift of God is eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord."—*Rom.* vi. 21—23.

THIS is a glorious text, if we will only believe it simply, and take it as it stands.

But if in place of St. Paul's words we put quite different words of our own, and say—By "the wages of sin is death," St. Paul means that the punishment of sin is eternal life in torture, then we say something which may be true, but which is not what St. Paul is speaking of here. For wages are not punishment, and death is not eternal life in torture, any more than in happiness.

That, one would think, was clear. It is our duty to take St. Paul's words, if we really believe them to be inspired, simply as they stand; and

if we do not quite understand them, to explain them by St. Paul's own words about these matters in other parts of his writings.

St. Paul was an inspired Apostle. Let him speak for himself. Surely he knew best what he wished to say, and how to say it.

Now St. Paul's opinions about death and eternal life are very clear; for he speaks of them often, and at great length.

He considered that the great enemy of God and man, the last enemy Christ would destroy, was death; and that, after death was destroyed, the end would come, when God would be all in all. Then came the question, which has puzzled men in all ages — How death came into the world. St. Paul answers, By sin. He says, as the author of the third chapter of Genesis says, that Adam became subject to death by his fall. By one man, he says, sin entered into the world, and death by sin, and so death passed upon all men, for that all have sinned. And thus, he says, death reigned even over those who had not sinned after the likeness of Adam's transgression.

That he is speaking of bodily death is clear, because he is always putting it in contrast to the resurrection to life, — not merely to a spiritual resurrection from the death of sin to the life of righteousness, but to the resurrection of the body, — to our Lord's being raised from the dead, that He might die no more.

Then he speaks of eternal life. He always speaks of it as an actual life, in a spiritual body, into which our mortal bodies are to be changed. Nothing can be clearer from what he says in 1 Cor. xv., that he means an actual rising again of our bodies from bodily death; an actual change in them; an actual life in them forever.

But he says, again and again, — As sin caused the death of the body, so righteousness is to cause its life.

"When ye were the servants of sin," he says to the Romans, "what fruit had ye in those things whereof ye are now ashamed? For the end of those things is death. But now being made free from sin, and become servants to God, ye have your fruit unto holiness, and the end everlasting life. For the wages of sin is

death; but the gift of God is eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord."

This is St. Paul's opinion. And we shall do well to believe it, and to learn from it, this day, and all days.

The wages of sin and the end of sin is death. Not the punishment of sin, but something much worse, — the wages of sin, and the end of sin.

And how is that worse news? My friends, every sinner knows so well in his heart that it is worse news, more terrible news, for him, that he tries to persuade himself that death is only the arbitrary punishment of his sin; or, quite as often, that the punishment of his sin is not even death, but eternal torment in the next life.

And why? Because, as long as he can believe that death, or hell, are only punishments arbitrarily fixed by God against his sins, he can hope that God will let him off the punishment. Die, he knows he must, because all men die; and so he makes up his mind to that: but being sent to hell after he dies is so very terrible a punishment that he cannot believe that God

will be so hard on him as that. No; he will get off, and be forgiven at last somehow, for surely God will not condemn him to hell. And so he finds it very convenient and comfortable to believe in hell, just because he does not believe that he is going there, whoever else may be.

But it is a very terrible, heartrending thought for a man to find out that what he will receive is not punishment, but wages; not punishment, but the end of the very road which he is travelling on. That the wages of sin, and the end of sin, to which it must lead, are death; that every time he sins he is earning those wages, deserving them, meriting them, and therefore receiving them by the just laws of the world of God. That does torment him, that does terrify him, if he will look steadfastly at the broad plain fact — You need not dream of being let off, respited, reprieved, pardoned in any way. The thing cannot be done. It is contrary to the laws of God and of God's universe. It is as impossible as that fire should not burn, or water run up hill. It is not a question of arbitrary

punishment, which may be arbitrarily remitted, but of wages, which you needs must take, weekly, daily, and hourly; and those wages are death: a question of travelling on a certain road, whereon, if you travel it long enough, you must come to the end of it; and the end is death. Your sins are killing you by inches; all day long they are sowing in you the seeds of disease and death. Every sin which you commit with your body shortens your bodily life. Every sin you commit with your mind, every act of stupidity, folly, wilful ignorance, helps to destroy your mind, and leave you dull, silly, devoid of right reason. Every sin you commit with your spirit, each sin of passion and temper, envy and malice, pride and vanity, injustice and cruelty, extravagance and self-indulgence, helps to destroy your spiritual life, and leave you bad, more and more unable to do the right and avoid the wrong, more and more unable to discern right from wrong; and that last is spiritual death, the eternal death of your moral being. There are three parts in you — body, mind, and spirit; and every sin

you commit helps to kill one of these three, and, in many cases, to kill all three together.

So, sinner, dream not of escaping punishment at the last. You are being punished now, for you are punishing yourself; and you will continue to be punished forever, for you will be punishing yourself forever, as long as you go on doing wrong, and breaking the laws which God has appointed for body, mind and spirit. You can see that a drunkard is killing himself, body and mind, by drink. You see that he knows that, poor wretch, as well as you. He knows that every time he gets drunk he is cutting so much off his life; and yet he cannot help it. He knows that drink is poison, and yet he goes back to his poison.

Then know, habitual sinner, that you are like that drunkard. That every bad habit in which you indulge is shortening the life of some of your faculties, and that God himself cannot save you from the doom which you are earning, deserving and working out for yourself every day and every hour.

Oh, how men hate that message! — the mes-

sage that the true wrath of God, necessary, inevitable, is revealed from heaven against all unrighteousness of men. How they writhe under it! How they shut their ears to it, and cry to their preachers, "No! Tell us of any wrath of God but that! Tell us rather of the torments of the damned, of a frowning God, of absolute decrees to destruction, of the reprobation of millions before they are born; any doctrine, however fearful and horrible, because we don't quite believe it, but only think that we ought to believe it. Yes, tell us anything rather than that news, which cuts at the root of our pride, of all our comfort, and all our superstition — the news that we cannot escape the consequences of our own actions; that there are no back stairs up which we may be smuggled into heaven; that as we sow, so we shall reap; that we are filled with the fruits of our own devices; every man his own poisoner, every man his own executioner, every man his own suicide; that hell begins in this life, and death begins before we die. Do not say that, because we cannot help believing it; for our own

consciousness and our own experience tell us it is true." No wonder that the preacher who tells men that is hated, is called a Rationalist, a Pantheist, a heretic, and what not, just because he does set forth such a living God, such a justice of God, such a wrath of God as would make the sinner tremble, if he believed in it, not merely once in a way, when he hears a stirring sermon about the endless torments, but all day long, going out and coming in, lying on his bed and walking by the way, always haunted by the shadow of himself, knowing that he is bearing about in him the perpetually growing death of sin.

And still more painful would this message be to the sinner, if he had any kindly feeling for others; and, thank God, there are few who have not that. For St. Paul's message to him is, that the wages of his sin is death, not merely to himself, but to others — to his family and children above all. So St. Paul declares in what he says of his doctrine of original or birth sin, by which, as the Article says, every man is very far gone from original righteousness, and is of his own

nature inclined to evil, so that the flesh lusteth against the spirit.

St. Paul's doctrine is simple and explicit. Death, he says, reigned over Adam's children, even over those who had not sinned after the likeness of Adam's transgression; agreeing with Moses, who declares God to be one who visits the sins of the fathers on the children, to the third and fourth generation of those who hate him. But how the sinner will shrink from this message — and shrink the more, the more feeling he is, the less he is wrapped up in selfishness. Yes, that message gives us such a view of the sinfulness of sin as none other can. It tells us why God hates sin with so unextinguishable a hatred, just because he is a God of love. It is not that man's sin injures God, insults God, as the heathen fancy. Who is God, that man can stir him up to pride, or wound or disturb his everlasting calm, his self-sufficient perfectness? "God is tempted of no man," says St. James. No. God hates sin. He loves all, and sin harms all; and the sinner may be a torment and a curse, not only to himself, not

only to those around him, but to children yet unborn.

This is bad news; and yet sinners must hear it. They must hear it not only put into words by Moses, or by St. Paul, or by any other inspired writer; but they must hear it likewise in that perpetual voice of God which we call facts.

Let the sinner who wishes to know what original sin means, and how actual sin in one man breeds original sin in his descendants, look at the world around him, and see. Let him see how St. Paul's doctrine and the doctrine of the Ten Commandments are proved true by experience and by fact; how the past, and how the present likewise, show us whole families, whole tribes, whole aristocracies, whole nations, dwindling down to imbecility, misery and destruction, because the sins of the fathers are visited on the children.

Physicians who see children born diseased; born stupid or even idiotic; born thwart-natured, or passionate, or false, or dishonest, or brutal, — they know well what original sin means, though they call it by their own name of

hereditary tendencies. And they know, too, how the sins of a parent, or of a grandparent, or even a great-grandparent, are visited on the children to the third and fourth generation; and they say, "It is a law of nature"; and so it is. But the laws of nature are the laws of God who made her, and his law is the same law by which death reigns even over those who have not sinned after the likeness of Adam; the law by which (even though if Christ be in us, the spirit is life, because of righteousness) the body, nevertheless, is dead, because of sin.

Parents, parents, who hear my words, beware — if not for your own sakes, at least for the sake of your children, and your children's children — lest the wages of your sin should be their death.

And by this time, surely, some of you will be asking, "What has he said? That there is no escape; that there is no forgiveness?"

None whatsoever, my friends, though you were to cry to heaven forever and ever, save the one old escape of which you hear in the church every Sunday morning: "When the

wicked man turneth away from his wickedness that he hath committed, and doeth that which is lawful and right, he shall save his soul alive."

What, does not the blood of Christ cleanse us from all sin?

Yes, from all sin. But not, necessarily, from the wages of all sin.

Judge for yourselves, my friends, again. Listen to the voice of God revealed in facts. If you, being a drunkard, have injured your constitution by drink, and then are converted, and repent, and turn to God with your whole soul, and become, as you may, if you will, a truly penitent, good, and therefore sober man,— will that cure the disease of your body? It will certainly palliate and ease it, because, instead of being drunken, you will have become sober; but still you will have shortened your days by your past sins, and, in so far, even though the Lord has put away your sin, its wages still remain, as death.

So it is, my friends, if you will only believe it, or rather see it with your own eyes, with every sin, and every sort of sin.

You will see, if you look, that the Article speaks exact truth when it says that the infection of nature doth remain, even in those that are regenerate. It says that of original sin; but it is equally true of actual sin.

Would to God that all men would but believe this, and give up the too common and too danerous notion that it is no matter if they go on wrong for a while, provided they come right at last!

No matter? I ask for facts again. Is there a man or woman in this church twenty years old who does not know that it matters? Who does not know that, if they have done wrong in youth, their own wrong deeds haunt them and torment them? — That they are, perhaps the poorer, perhaps the sicklier, perhaps the more ignorant, perhaps the sillier, perhaps the more sorrowful this day, for things which they did twenty, thirty years ago? Is there any one in this church who ever did a wrong thing without smarting for it? If there is (which I question), let him be sure that it is only because his time is not come. Do not fancy that because you

are forgiven you may not be actually less good men all your lives by having sinned when young.

I know it is sometimes said, "The greater the sinner the greater the saint." I do not believe that, because I do not see it. I see and I thank God for it, that men who have been very wrong at one time, come very right afterwards; that, having found out in earnest that the wages of sin are death, they do repent in earnest, and receive the gift of eternal life through Jesus Christ. But I see, too, that the bad habits, bad passions, bad methods of thought which they have indulged in youth, remain more or less, and make them worse men, sillier men, less useful men, less happy men, sometimes to their lives' end; and they, if they be true Christians, know it, and repent of their early sins, not once for all only, but all their lives long, because they feel that they have weakened and worsened themselves thereby.

It stands to reason, my friends, that it should be so. If a man loses his way and finds it again, he is so much the less forward on his way, surely, by all the time he has spent in getting

back into the road. If a child has a violent illness, it stops growing, because the life and nourishment which ought to have gone towards its growth are spent in curing its disease. And so, if a man has indulged in bad habits in his youth, he is but too likely (let him do what he will) to be a less good man for it to his life's end, because the spirit of God, which ought to have been making him grow in grace, freely and healthily to the stature of a perfect man, to the fulness of the measure of Christ, is striving to conquer old bad habits, and cure old diseases of character and the man, even though he does enter into life, enters into it halt and maimed, and the wages of his sin have been, as they always will be, death to some powers, some faculties of his soul.

Think over these things my friends, and believe that the wages of sin are death, and that there is no escaping from God's just and everlasting laws. But meanwhile, let us judge no man. This is a great and a solemn reason for observing, with fear and trembling, our Lord's command, for it is nothing less, "Judge not and

ye shall not be judged; condemn not and ye shall not be condemned."

For we never can know how much of any man's misconduct is to be set down to original and how much to actual sin; — how much disease of mind and heart he has inherited from his parents, how much he has brought upon himself.

Therefore, judge no man but yourselves. Search your own hearts, to see what manner of men you really wish to be; judge yourselves, lest God should judge you.

Do you wish to go on as you like here on earth, right or wrong, in the hope that, somehow or other, the punishment of your sins will be forgiven you at the last day?

Then know that that is impossible. As a man sows, so shall he reap; and if you sow to the flesh, of the flesh you will reap corruption. The wages of sin are death. Those wages will be paid you, and you must take them whether you like or not.

But do you wish to be good? Do you see (I trust in God that many of you do) that good-

ness is the only wise, safe, prudent life for you, because it is the only path the end of which is not death?

Do you see that goodness is the only right and honorable life for you, because it is the only path by which you can do your duty to man or to God; the only method by which you can show your gratitude to God for all his goodness to you, and can please him, in return for all that he has done by his grace and free love to bless you?

Do you, in a word, repent you truly of your former sins, and purpose to lead a new life? Then know that all beyond is the free grace, the free gift of God. You have to earn nothing, to buy nothing. The will is all God asks. Eternal life is the gift of God through Jesus Christ.

Freely he forgives you all your past sins, for the sake of that precious blood which was shed on the cross for the sins of the whole world. Freely he takes you back, as his child, to your Father's house. Freely he gives you his Holy Spirit, the Spirit of Goodness, the Spirit of Life,

to put into your mind good desires, and enable you to bring those desires to good effect, that you may live the eternal life of grace and goodness forever, whether in earth or heaven.

Yes, it is the gift of God which raises you from the death of sin to the life of righteousness; and if you have that gift, you will not murmur, surely, though you have to bear, more or less, the just and natural consequences of your former sins; though you be, through your own guilt, a sadder man to your dying day. Be content. You are forgiven. You are cleansed from your sin; is not that mercy enough? Why are you to demand of God that he should over and above cleanse you from the consequences of your sin? He may leave them there to trouble and sadden you, just because he loves you and desires to chasten you, and keep you in mind of what you were, and what you would be again, at any moment, if his Spirit left you to yourself. You may have to enter into life halt and maimed: yet, be content; you have a thousand times more than you deserve, for at least you enter into Life.

# DE PROFUNDIS.

"Out of the deep have I cried unto thee, O Lord. Lord, hear my voice." — *Ps.* cxxx. *2.*

WHAT is this deep of which David speaks so often? He knew it well, for he had been in it often and long. He was just the sort of man to be in it often. A man with great good in him, and great evil; with very strong passions and feelings, dragging him down into the deep, and great light and understanding to show him the dark secrets of that horrible pit when he was in it; and with great love of God too, and of order, and justice, and of all good and beautiful things, to make him feel the horribleness of that pit where he ought not to be, all the more from its difference, its contrast, with the beautiful world of light, and order, and righteousness where he ought to be. Therefore he knew that deep well, and abhorred it, and he

heaps together every ugly name, to try and express what no man can express, the horror of that place. It is a horrible pit, mire and clay, where he can find no footing, but sinks all the deeper for his struggling. It is a place of darkness and of storms, a shoreless and bottomless sea, where he is drowning, and drowning, while all God's waves and billows go over him. It is a place of utter loneliness, where he sits like a sparrow on the housetop, or a doleful bird in the desert, while God has put his lovers and friends away from him, and hid his acquaintance out of his sight, and no man cares for his soul, and all men seem to him liars, and God himself seems to have forgotten him and forgotten all the world. It is a dreadful net which has entangled his feet, a dark prison in which he is set so fast that he cannot get forth. It is a torturing, disgusting disease, which gives his flesh no health, and his bones no rest, and his wounds are putrid and corrupt. It is a battle-field after the fight, where he seems to lie stripped among the dead, like those who are wounded and cut away from God's hand, and lies groan-

ing in the dust of death, seeing nothing round him but doleful shapes of destruction and misery, alone in the outer darkness, while a horrible dread overwhelms him. Yea, it is hell itself, the pit of hell, the nethermost hell, he says, where God's wrath burns like fire, till his tongue cleaves to his gums, and his bones are burnt up like a firebrand, till he is weary of crying; his throat is dry, his heart fails him for waiting so long upon his God.

Yes; a dark and strange place is that same deep pit of God — if, indeed, it be God's and God made it. Perhaps God did not make it. For God saw everything that he had made, and behold it was very good; and that pit cannot be very good, for all good things are orderly and in shape; and in that pit is no shape, no order, nothing but contradiction and confusion. When a man is in that pit, it will seem to him as if he were alone in the world, and longing above all things for company; and yet he will hate to have any one to speak to him, and wrap himself up in himself to brood over his own misery. When he is in that pit he shall be so blind that

he can see nothing, though his eyes be open in broad noonday. When he is in that pit he will hate the thing which he loves most, and love the thing which he hates most. When he is in that pit he will long to die, and yet cling to life desperately, and be horribly afraid of dying. When he is in that pit it will seem to him that God is awfully, horribly near him, and he will try to hide from God, try to escape from under God's hand; and yet all the while that God seems so dreadfully near him, God will seem further off from him than ever, millions and millions of miles away, parted from him by walls of iron, and a great gulf which he can never pass. There is nothing but contradiction in that pit. The man who is in it is of two minds about himself, and his kin and neighbors, and all heaven and earth, and knows not where to turn, or what to think, or even where he is at all.

For the food which he gets in that deep pit is very hunger of soul, and rage and vain desires. And the ground which he stands on in that deep is a bottomless quagmire, and

doubt, and change, and shapeless dread. And the air which he breathes in that deep is the very fire of God, which burns up everlastingly all the chalk and dross of the world.

I said that that deep was not merely the deep of affliction. No; for you may see men with every comfort which wealth and home can give, who are tormented day and night in that deep pit in the midst of all their prosperity, calling for a drop of water to cool their tongue, and finding none. And you may see poor creatures dying in agony on lonely sick-beds, who are not in that pit at all, but in that better place whereof it is written, "Blessed are they who, going through the vale of misery, use it for a well, and the pools are filled with water"; and again, "If any man thirst, let him come to me, and drink"; and "the water that I shall give him shall be in him a well of water, springing up to everlasting life."

No — that deep pit is a far worse place, an utterly bad place; and yet it may be good for a man to have fallen into it; and, strangely enough, if he do fall in, the lower he sinks in it, the better

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for him at last. That is another strange contradiction in that pit, which David found, that though it was a bottomless pit, the deeper he sank in it, the more likely he was to find his feet set on a rock; the further down in the nethermost hell he was, the nearer he was to being delivered from the nethermost hell.

Of course, if he had stayed in that pit, he must have died, body and soul. No mortal man, or immortal soul, could endure it long. No immortal soul could; for he would lose all hope, all faith in God, all feeling of there being anything like justice and order in the world, all hope for himself or for mankind, lying so in that living grave where no man can see God's righteousness, or his faithfulness in that land where all things are forgotten.

And his mere mortal body could not stand it. The misery and terror and confusion of his soul would soon wear out his body, and he would die, as I have seen men actually die when their souls have been left in that deep somewhat too long; shrink together into dark melancholy, and pine away, and die. And I have seen

sweet young creatures too, whom God for some purpose of his own (which must be good and loving, for *he* did it) has let fall awhile into that deep of darkness, and then in compassion to their youth and tenderness and innocence has lifted them gently out again, and set their weary feet upon the everlasting Rock, which is Christ, and has filled them with the light of his countenance, and joy and peace in believing, and has led them by green pastures and made them rest by the waters of comfort; and yet, though their souls were healed, their bodies were not. The fearful struggle has been too much for frail humanity, and they have drooped and faded, and gone peacefully after a while home to their God, as a fair flower withers if the fire has but once passed over it.

But some I have seen, men and women, who have arisen, like David, out of that strange deep, all the stronger for their fall; and have found out another strange contradiction about that deep, and the fire of God which burns below in it. For that fire hardens a man and softens him at the same time; and he comes

out of it hardened to that hardness of which it is written, "Do thou endure hardness like a good soldier of Jesus Christ"; and again, "I have fought the good fight, I have kept the faith, I have finished my course"; yet softened to that softness of which it is written, "Be ye tender-hearted, compassionate, forgiving one another, even as God for Christ's sake has forgiven you"; — and again, "We have a High Priest who can be touched with the feeling of our infirmities, seeing that he has been tempted in all things like as we are, yet without sin."

Happy, thrice happy are they who have thus walked through the valley of the shadow of death, and found it the path which leads to everlasting life. Happy are they who have thus writhed awhile in the fierce fire of God, and have had burnt out of them the chaff and dross, and all which offends, and makes them vain, light, and yet makes them dull, drags them down at the same time, till only the pure gold of God's righteousness is left, seven times tried in the fire, incorruptible, and precious in the sight of God and man. Such people need not

regret — they will not regret — all that they have gone through. It has made them brave, made them sober, made them patient. It has given them

> The reason firm, the temperate will,
> Endurance, foresight, strength and skill;

and so has shaped them into the likeness of Christ, who was made perfect by suffering; and though he were a Son, yet in the days of his flesh made strong supplication and crying with tears to his Father, and was heard in that he feared; and so, though he died on the cross and descended into hell, yet triumphed over death and hell by dying and by descending, and conquered them by submitting to them. And yet they have been softened in that fierce furnace of God's wrath into another likeness of Christ — which after all is still the same; the character which he showed when he wept by the grave of Lazarus and over the sinful city of Jerusalem; which he showed when his heart yearned over the perishing multitude, and over the leper and the palsied man, and the maniac possessed with devils; the character which he

showed when he said to the woman taken in adultery, "Neither do I condemn thee; go and sin no more"; which he showed when he said to the sinful Magdalene, who washed his feet with tears, and wiped them with her hair, "her sins, which are many, are forgiven; for she loved much"; the likeness which he showed in his very death agony upon the torturing cross, when he prayed for his murderers, "Father, forgive them, for they know not what they do." This is the character which man may get in that dark deep: To feel for all, and feel with all; to rejoice with those who rejoice, and weep with those who weep; to understand people's trials and make allowances for their temptations; to put one's self in their place, till we see with their eyes, and feel with their hearts, till we judge no man, and have hope for all; to be fair and patient and tender with every one we meet; to despise no one, despair of no one, because Christ despises none and despairs of none; to look upon every one we meet with love, almost with pity, as people who either have been down into the deep of horror, or may

go down into it any day; to see our own sins in other people's sins, and know that we might do what they do, and feel as they feel, any moment, did God desert us; to give and forgive, to live and let live, even as Christ gives to us, and forgives us, and lives for us, and lets us live, in spite of all our sins.

And how shall we learn this? How shall the bottomless pit, if we fall into it, be but a pathway to the everlasting rock?

David tells us:

"Out of the deep have I cried unto thee, O Lord."

He cried to God.

Not to himself, his own learning, talents, wealth, prudence, to pull him out of that pit. Not to princes, nobles, and great men. Not to doctrines, books, church-goings. Not to the dearest friend he had on earth; for they had forsaken him, could not understand him, thought him, perhaps, beside himself. Not to his own good works, almsgiving, church-goings, church-buildings. Not to his own experiences, faith's assurances, frames or feelings. The matter was

too terrible to be plastered over in that way, or in any way. He was face to face with God alone; in utter weakness, in utter nakedness of soul, he cried to God himself. There was the lesson.

God took away from him all things, that he might have no one to cry to but God.

God took him up, and cast him down; and there he sat all alone, astonished and confounded, like Rizpah, the daughter of Aiah, when she sat alone on the parching rock. Like Rizpah, he watched the dead corpses of all his hopes and plans, all for which he had lived, and which made life worth having, withering away there by his side. But it was told David what Rizpah, the daughter of Aiah, had done. And it is told to one greater than David, even to Jesus Christ, the Son of David, what the poor soul does when it sits alone in its despair. Or, rather, it need not be told him, for he sees all, weeps over all, will comfort all; and it shall be to that poor soul as it was to poor deserted Hagar in the sandy desert, when the water was spent in the bottle, and she cast her child — the

only thing she had left — under one of the shrubs and hurried away; for she said, "Let me not see the child die." And the angel of the Lord called out of heaven, saying, "The Lord hath heard the voice of the lad where he is"; and God opened her eyes, and she saw a well of water.

It shall be with that poor soul as it was with Moses, when he went up alone into the mount of God, and fasted forty days and forty nights amid the earthquake and the thunderstorm, and the rocks which melted before the Lord. And behold, when it was past, he talked face to face with God, as a man talketh with his friend, and his countenance shone with heavenly light when he came down triumphant out of the mount of God.

So shall it be with every soul of man who, being in the deep, cries out of that deep to God, whether in bloody India or in peaceful England. For he with whom we have to do is not a tyrant, but a Father; not a taskmaster, but a Giver and a Redeemer. We may ask him freely, as David does, to consider our complaint,

because he will consider it well, and understand it, and do it justice. He is not extreme to mark what is done amiss, and therefore we can abide his judgments. There is mercy with him, and therefore it is worth while to fear him. He waits for us year after year, with patience which cannot tire; therefore it is but fair that we should wait awhile for him. With him is plenteous redemption, and therefore redemption enough for us, and for those likewise whom we love. He will redeem us from all our sins; and what do we need more? He will make us perfect, even as our Father in heaven is perfect. Let him then, if he must, make us perfect by suffering. By sufferings Christ was made perfect; and what was the best path for Jesus Christ is surely good enough for us, even though it be a rough and thorny one. Let us lie still beneath God's hand; for though his hand be heavy upon us, it is strong and safe beneath us too; and none can pluck us out of his hand, for in him we live and move and have our being; and though we go down into hell with David, with David we shall find God there, and find with David that

he will not leave our souls in hell, or suffer his holy ones to see corruption. Yes; have faith in God. Nothing in thee which he has made shall see corruption; for it is a thought of God's, and no thought of his can perish. Nothing shall be purged out of thee but thy disease; nothing shall be burned out of thee but thy dross; and that in thee shall be saved, and live to all eternity, of which God said at the beginning, Let us make man in our own image. Yes; have faith in God, and say to him once for all, "Though thou slay me, yet will I love thee; for thou lovedst me in Jesus Christ before the foundation of the world."

# THE PURE IN HEART.

"Unto the pure all things are pure: but unto them that are defiled and unbelieving is nothing pure: but even their mind and conscience is defiled." — *Titus* i. 15.

THIS seems at first a strange and startling saying; but it is a true one, and the more we think over it, the more we shall find it true.

All things are pure in themselves, good in themselves, because God made them. Is it not written, "God saw all that he had made, and behold, it was very good?" Therefore St. Paul says that all things are ours, and that Christ gives us all things richly to enjoy. All we need is, to use things in the right way; that is, in the way in which God intended them to be used.

For God is a God of truth; a true, a faithful, and — if I may so speak — an honest and honorable and fair God; not a deceiving or unfair

God, who lays snares for his creatures, or leads them into temptation. That would be a bad God, a cruel God, very unlike the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ. He has put us into a good world, and not a wilderness, as some people call it. If any part of this world be a wilderness, it is because men have made it so, or left it so, by their own wilfulness, ignorance, cowardice, laziness, violence. No; God, I say, has put us into a good world, and given us pure and harmless appetites, feelings, relations. Therefore all the relations of life are holy. To be a husband, a father, a brother, a son, is pure and good. To have property and to use it; to enjoy ourselves in this life as far as we can, without hurting ourselves or our neighbors; all this is pure and good and holy. God does not grudge or upbraid. He does not frown upon innocent pleasure. For God is light, and in him is no darkness at all. Therefore he rejoices in seeing his creatures healthy and happy. Therefore, as I believe, Christ smiles out of heaven upon the little children at their play; and the laugh of a babe is heavenly music in his ears.

All things are pure which God has given to man. And therefore, if a man be pure in heart, all which God has given him will not only do him no harm, but do him good. All the comforts and blessings of this life will help to make him a better man. They will teach him about his own character; about human nature, and the people with whom he has to do; ay — about God himself, as it is written, "Blessed are the pure in heart, for they shall see God."

All the blessings and comforts of this life, my friends (as well as the anxieties which must come to those who have a family, or property, even if he do not meet with losses and afflictions), ought to help to improve a man's temper, to call out in him right feelings, to teach him more and more of the likeness of God.

If he be a married man, marriage ought to teach him not to live for himself only, but to sacrifice his own fancies, his own ease, his own will, for the sake of the woman whom God has given him; as Christ sacrificed himself and his own life for mankind. And so, by the feelings of a husband, he may enter into the mystery of

the love of Christ, and of the cross of Christ; and so, if only he be pure in heart, he will see God.

If he have parents, he may learn by being a son how blessed it is to obey, how useful to a man's character to submit; ay, he will find out more still. He will find out that not by being self-willed and independent do the finest and noblest parts of his character come out, but by copying his Father in everything; that going where his Father sends him, being jealous of his Father's honor, doing not his own will, but his Father's,— that all this, I say, is its own reward; for instead of lowering a man, it raises him, and calls out in him all that is purest, tenderest, soberest, bravest. I tell you this day just as far as you are good sons to your parents, so far will you be able to understand the mystery of the coequal and coeternal Son of God, who, though he were in the form of God, did not snatch greedily at being on the same footing with his Father, but emptied himself, and took on him the form of a slave, that he might do his Father's will and reveal his

Father's glory. And so, if you be only pure in heart, you will see God.

If, again, a man have children, how they ought to teach him, to train him; — teach him to restrain his own temper, lest he provoke them to anger; to be calm and moderate with them, lest he frighten them into lying; to avoid bad language, gluttony, drunkenness, and every coarse sin, lest he tempt them to follow his example. I tell you, friends, that you will find, if you choose, all the noblest, most generous, most Godlike parts of your character called out to your children; and by having the feelings of a father to your children, learn what feelings our Father in heaven has towards us, his human offspring. And so, if only you be pure in heart, you will see God.

If, again, a man has money, money can teach him (as it teaches hundreds of pure-hearted men) that charity and generosity are not only a duty, but an honor and a joy; that "mercy is twice blest; it blesses him that gives and him that takes"; that giving is the highest pleasure upon earth, because it is God's own pleasure:

because the blessedness of God and the glory of God is this, that he giveth to all liberally, and upbraideth not. And so in his wealth — if only he be pure in heart, a man will see God.

If, again, a man has health and strength and high spirits, they too will teach him, if his heart be pure. He will learn from them to look up to God as the Lord and Giver of life, health, strength, of the power to work and the power to delight in working, because God himself is ever full of life, ever busy, ever rejoicing to put forth his almighty power for the good of the whole universe; as it is written, "My Father worketh hitherto, and I work." And so — in every relation of life — if only a man's heart be pure, he will see God.

How, then, can we get the pure heart which will make all things pure to us? By asking for the Spirit of God, the Holy Spirit, the Pure Spirit, in whom is no selfishness.

For if our hearts be selfish, they cannot be pure. The pure in heart is the same as the man whose eye is single, and that is the man who is not caring for himself, thinking of him-

self. If a man be thinking of himself, he will never enjoy life. The pure blessings which God has given him will be no blessings to him; as it is written, "He that saveth his life shall lose it."

Do you not know that that is true? Do not the miseries of life (I do not mean the afflictions, like loss of friends or kin), but the miseries of life which make a man dark and fretful, and prevent his enjoying God's gifts — do they not come, nineteen-twentieths of them, from thinking about one's self; from lusting and longing after this and that; from spite, vanity, bad temper, wounded pride, disappointed covetousness? "I cannot get this or that,—that money, that place, this or that fine thing or the other,—and how can I be contented?" There is a man whose heart is not pure. "That man has used me ill, and I cannot help thinking of it, brooding over it. I cannot forgive him. How can I be expected to forgive him?" There is a man whose heart is not pure; and more, there is a man who is making himself miserable.

See, again, how a man may make marriage a

curse to him instead of a blessing, without being unfaithful to his wife (which we all know to be simply abominable and unmanly, and far below anything of which I am talking now). And how? Simply by bad temper, vanity, greediness, and selfish love of his own dignity, his own pleasure, his own this, that, and the other. So, too, he may make his children a torment to him, instead of letting them be God's lesson-book to him, in which he may see the likeness of the angels in heaven.

He may make his wealth a continual anxiety to him; ay, he may make it, by ambition, covetousness, and wild speculation, the cause of his shame and ruin, if only his heart be not pure.

Ay, there is not a blessing on earth which a man may not turn into a curse. There is not a good gift of God out of which a man may not get harm, if only his heart be not pure; as it is written, "To those who are defiled and unbelieving nothing is pure: but even their mind and conscience are defiled."

But defiled with what? Fouled with what?

There is the question. Many answers have been invented by people who did not believe in that faithful and true God of whom I told you just now; people who fancied that this world was a bad world, and that God laid snares for his creatures and tempted his creatures. But the true answer is only to be got, like most true answers, by observing; by using our eyes and ears, and seeing what really makes people turn blessings into curses, and suck poison out of every flower.

And that is, simply, self.

If you want to spoil all that God gives you; if you want to be miserable yourself, and a maker of misery to others, the way is easy enough. Only be selfish, and it is done at once. Be defiled and unbelieving. Defile and foul God's good gifts by self, and by loving yourself more than what is right. Do not believe that the good God knows your needs before you ask, and will give you whatsoever is good for you. Think about yourself, about what *you* want, what *you* like, what respect people ought to pay *you*, what people think of *you*, and then

to you nothing will be pure. You will spoil everything you touch; you will make sin and misery for yourself out of everything which God sends you; you will be as wretched as you choose on earth, or in heaven either.

In heaven either, I say. For that proud, greedy, selfish, self-seeking spirit would turn heaven into hell. It did turn heaven into hell, for the great devil himself. It was by pride, by seeking his own glory — (so, at least, wise men say) — that he fell from heaven to hell. He was not content to give up his own will and do God's will, like the other angels. He was not content to serve God and rejoice in God's glory. He would be a master himself, and set up for himself, and rejoice in his own glory; and so, when he wanted to make a private heaven of his own, he found that he had made a hell. When he wanted to be a little God for himself, he lost the life of the true God, to lose which is eternal death. And why? Because his heart was not pure, clean, honest, simple, unselfish. Therefore he saw God no more, and learned to hate him whose name is love.

May God keep our hearts pure from that selfishness which is the root of all sin; from selfishness, out of which alone spring adultery, foul living, drunkenness, evil speaking, lying, slandering, injustice, oppression, cruelty, and all which makes man worse than the beasts. May God give us those pure hearts of which it is written, that the fruit of the spirit is love, joy, peace, long-suffering, gentleness, goodness, meekness, temperance. Against such, St. Paul says, there is no law. And why? Because no law is needed. For, as a wise father says — "Love, and do what thou wilt"; for then thou wilt be sure to will what is right; and, as St. Paul says, if your heart be pure, all things will be pure to you.

# TRUE PRUDENCE.

"Take, therefore, no thought for the morrow: for the morrow shall take thought for the things of itself. Sufficient unto the day is the evil thereof". — *Matt.* vi. 34.

LET me say a few words to you on this text. Be not anxious, it tells you. And why? Because you have to be prudent. In practice, fretting and anxiety help no man towards prudence. We must all be as prudent and industrious as we can; agreed. But does fretting make us the least more prudent? Does anxiety make us the least more industrious? On the contrary, I know nothing which cripples a man more, and hinders him working manfully, than anxiety. Look at the worst case of all—a man who is melancholy, and fancies all is going wrong with him and that he must be ruined, and has a mind full of all sorts of dark, hopeless fancies. Does he work any the more, or

try to escape one of these dangers which he fancies are hanging over him? So far from it, he gives himself up to them without a struggle; he sits moping, helpless, and useless, and says, "There is no use in struggling. If it will come it must come." He has lost spirit for work, and lost the mind for work, too. His mind is so full of these dark fears that he cannot turn it to laying any prudent plan to escape from the very things which he dreads.

And so, in a less degree, with people who fret and are anxious. They may be in a great bustle, but they do not get their work done. They run hither and thither, trying this and that, but leaving everything half done, to fly off to something else. Or else they spend time unprofitably in dreaming, and expecting and complaining, which might be spent profitably in working. And they are always apt to lose their heads and their tempers just when they need them most; to do in their hurry the very last things which they ought to have done; to try so many roads that they choose the wrong road after all, from mere confusion, and run with open

eyes into the very pit which they have been afraid of falling into. As we say here, they will go all through the wood to cut a straight stick, and bring out a crooked one at last. My friends, even in a mere worldly way, the men whom I have seen succeed best in life have always been cheerful and hopeful men, who went about their business with a smile on their faces, and took the changes and chances of this mortal life like men, facing rough and smooth alike as it came, and so found the truth of the old proverbs that "Good times, and bad times, and all time, pass over." Of all men, perhaps, who have lived in our days, the most truly successful was the great Duke of Wellington; and one thing, I believe, which helped him most to become great, was that he was so wonderfully free from vain fretting and complaining, free from useless regrets about the past, from useless anxieties for the future. Though he had for years on his shoulders a responsibility which might have well broken down the spirit of any man; though the lives of thousands of brave men, and the welfare of great kingdoms — ay, humanly speaking,

the fate of all Europe — depended on his using his wisdom in the right place, and one mistake might have brought ruin and shame on him and on tens of thousands, yet no one ever saw him anxious, confused, terrified. Though for many years he was much tried and hampered, and unjustly and foolishly kept from doing his work as he knew it ought to be done, yet when the time came for work, his head was always clear, his spirit was always ready; and therefore he succeeded in the most marvellous way. Solomon says, "Better is he that ruleth his spirit, than he that taketh a city." Now the great Duke had learned in most things to rule his spirit, and therefore he was able not only to take cities but to do better still, to deliver cities — ay and whole countries — out of the hand of armies often far stronger, humanly speaking, than his own.

And for an example of what I mean I will tell you a story of him which I know to be true. Some one once asked him what his secret was for winning battles. And he said that he had no secret; that he did not know how to win battles, and that no man knew. For all, he said, that

man could do, was to look beforehand steadily at all the chances, and lay all possible plans beforehand; but from the moment the battle began, he said, no mortal prudence was of use and no mortal man could know what the end would be. A thousand new accidents might spring up every hour, and scatter all his plans to the winds; and all that man could do was to comfort himself with the thought that he had done his best, and to trust in God.

Now, my friends, learn a lesson from this, a lesson for the battle of life, which every one of us has to fight from our cradle to our grave — the battle against misery, poverty, misfortune, sickness; the battle against worse enemies even than they — the battle against our own weak hearts and the sins which so easily beset us; against laziness, dishonesty, profligacy, bad tempers, hard-heartedness, deserved disgrace, the contempt of our neighbors, and just punishment from Almighty God. Take a lesson, I say, from the great Duke for the battle of life. Be not fretful and anxious about the morrow. Face things like men; count the chances like

men; lay your plans like men; but remember, like men, that a fresh chance may any moment spoil all your plans; remember that there are a thousand dangers round you from which your prudence cannot save you. Do your best; and then, like the great Duke, comfort yourselves with the thought that you have done your best, and, like him, trust in God. Remember that God is really and in very truth your Father, and that without him not a sparrow falls to the ground; and are ye not of more value than many sparrows, O ye of little faith? Remember that he knows what you have need of before you ask him; that he gives you all day long, of his own free generosity, a thousand things for which you never dream of asking him; and believe that in all the chances and changes of this life, in bad luck as well as in good, in failure as well as success, in poverty as well as wealth, in sickness as well as health, he is giving you and me, and all mankind, good gifts, which we in our ignorance, and our natural dread of what is unpleasant, should never dream of asking him for, but which are good

for us nevertheless; like him from whom they come, the Father of lights, from whom comes every good and perfect gift; who is neither neglectful, capricious, or spiteful, for in him is neither variableness, nor shadow of turning, but who is always loving unto every man, and his mercy is over all his works.

Bear this in mind, my friends, in all the troubles of life — that you have a Father in heaven who knows what you have need of before you ask him, and your infirmity in asking, and who is wont — is regularly accustomed all day long — to give you more than either you desire or deserve. And bear it in mind even more carefully, if you ever become anxious and troubled about your own soul and the life to come.

Many people are troubled with such anxieties, and are continually asking, "Shall I be saved or not?" In some this anxiety comes from bad teaching, and the hearing of false, cruel, and superstitious doctrine. In others it seems to be mere bodily disease, constitutional weakness and fearfulness, which prevents their

fighting against dark and sad thoughts when they arise; but in both cases I think that it is the devil himself who tempts them, the devil himself who takes advantage of their bodily weakness, or of the false doctrines which they have heard, and begins whispering in their ears, "You have no Father in heaven. God does not love you. His promises are not meant for you. He does not will your salvation, but your damnation, and there is no hope for you"; till the poor soul falls into what is called religious melancholy, and moping madness, and despair, and dread of the devil; and often believes that the devil has got complete power over him, and that he is the slave of Satan forever, till, in some cases, the man is even driven to kill himself in the agony of his despair.

Now, my friends, the true answer to all such dark thoughts is, "Your Heavenly Father knows what you have need of before you ask him; therefore be not anxious about the morrow, for the morrow shall take care for the things of itself; sufficient for the day is the evil thereof."

For in the first place, my friends, the devil was a liar from the beginning, and therefore the chances are a million to one against his speaking the truth in any case; and if he tells you that you are going to be damned, I should take that for a fair sign that you were *not* going to be damned, simply because the devil says it, and therefore it *cannot* be true. No, my friends, the people who have real reason to be afraid are just those who are not afraid — the self-conceited, self-satisfied souls; for the devil attacks them too, as he does every one, by their weakest point, and has his lie ready for them, and whispers, "You are all right; you are safe; you cannot fall; your salvation is sure." Or else, "You hold the right doctrine; you are orthodox and perfectly right, and whoever differs from you must be wrong"; and so tempts them to vain confidence and unclean living, or else into pride, hardness of heart, self-willed and self-conceited quarrelling and slandering and lying for the sake of their own party in the Church. It is the self-confident ones who have reason to fear and tremble; for after pride

comes a fall. They have reason to fear, lest while they are crying peace and safety, and thanking God that they are not as other men are, sudden destruction come on them; but you anxious, trembling souls, who are terrified at the sight of your own sins, you who feel how weak you are, and ignorant, and confused, and unworthy to do aught but cry, "God be merciful to me a sinner!" you are the very ones who have least reason to be afraid, just because you are most afraid; you are the true penitents over whom your Father in heaven rejoices; you are those of whom he has said, "I am the High and Holy One who inhabiteth eternity; yet I dwell with him that is of an humble and contrite heart, to revive the spirit of the humble, and to comfort the soul of the contrite ones"; as he will revive and comfort you, if you will only have faith in God, and take your stand on your baptism, and from that safe ground defy the devil and all his dark imaginations, saying, "I am God's child, and God is my father, and Christ's blood was shed for me, and the Holy Spirit of God is with me; and in the strength

of my baptism I will hope against hope. I trust in the Lord my God, who has called me into this state of salvation, that he will keep to the end the soul which I have committed to him through Jesus Christ my Lord."

Yes. Be not anxious for the morrow, and, much more, be not anxious for the life to come. Your Heavenly Father knew that you had need of salvation long before you asked him. Eighteen hundred years before you were born, he sent his Son into the world to die for you; when you were but an infant he called you to be baptized into his Church, and receive your share of his Spirit. Long before you thought of him, he thought of you; long before you loved him he loved you; and if he so loved you that he spared not his only begotten Son, but freely gave him for you, will he not with that Son freely give you all things? Therefore, fear not, little flock; it is your father's good pleasure to give you the kingdom.

And be not anxious about the morrow; for the morrow shall be anxious about the things of itself. Be anxious about to-day, if you will,

and "work out your salvation with fear and trembling"; for it is God who works in you to will and to do of his good pleasure, and therefore you can do right; and therefore, again, it is your own fault if you do not do right. And yet, for that very reason, be not over-anxious; for "if God be with you, who can be against you?" If God, who is so mighty that he made all heaven and earth, be on our side, surely stronger is he that is with you than he that is against you. If God, who so loved you that he gave his only begotten Son for you, be on your side, surely you have a friend whom you can trust. "What can part you from his love?" St. Paul asks you; from God's love, which is as boundless and eternal as God himself; nothing can part you from it but your own sin.

"But I do sin," you say, "again and again, and that is what makes me fearful. I try to do better, but I fall and I fail all day long. I try not to be covetous and worldly, but poverty tempts me, and I fall; I try to keep my temper, but people upset me, and I say things of which I am bitterly ashamed the next minute. Can

God love such a one as me?" My answer is, If God loved the whole world when it was dead in trespasses and sins, and *not* trying to be better, much more will he love you who are not dead in trespasses and sins, and are trying to be better. If he were not still helping you, if his Spirit were not with you, you would care no more to become better than a dog or an ox cares. And if you fall — why, arise again. Get up and go on. You may be sorely bruised, and soiled with your fall, but is that any reason for lying still and giving up the struggle cowardly? In the name of Jesus Christ, arise and walk. He will wash you, and you shall be clean. He will heal you, and you shall be strong again. What else can a traveller expect who is going over rough ground in the dark, but to fall and bruise himself, and to miss his way, too, many a time: but is that any reason for his sitting down in the middle of the moor, and saying, "I shall never get to my journey's end?" What else can a soldier expect but wounds, and defeat, too, often; but is that any reason for his running away, and

crying, "We shall never take the place?" If our brave men at Sevastopol had done so, and lost heart each time they were beaten back, not only would they have never taken the place, but the Russians would have driven them long ago into the sea, and perhaps not a man of them would have escaped. And, be sure of it, your battle is like theirs. Every one of us has to fight for the everlasting life of his soul against all the devils of hell, and there is no use in running away from them; they will come after us stronger than ever, unless we go to face them. As with our men at Sevastopol, unless we beat the enemy, the enemy will destroy us; and our only hope is to fight to-day's battle like men, in the strength which God gives us, and trust him to give us strength to fight to-morrow's battle too, when it comes. For here again, as it was at Sevastopol, so it is with our souls. Let our men be as prudent as they might, they never knew what to-morrow's battle would be like, or where the enemy might come upon them; and no more do we. They in general could not see the very enemy who was

close on them; and no more can we see our enemy, near to us though he is. To-morrow's temptations may be quite different from to-day's. To-day we may be tempted to be dishonest, to-morrow to lose our tempers, the day afterwards to be vain and conceited, and a hundred other things. Let the morrow be anxious about the things of itself, then; and face to-day's enemy, and do the duty which lies nearest you. Our brave men did so. They kept themselves watchful, and took all the precautions they could in a general way, just as we ought to do each in his own habits and temper; but the great business was, to go steadily on at their work, and do each day what they could do, instead of giving way to vain fears and fancies about what they might have to do some day, which would have only put them out of heart, and confused and distracted them. And so it came to pass, that as their day so their strength was; that each day they got forward somewhat, and had strength and courage left besides to drive back each new assault as it came; and so at last, after many mistakes and

many failures, through sickness and weakness, thirst and hunger, and every misery except fear which can fall on man, they conquered suddenly, and beyond their highest hopes, — as every one will conquer suddenly, and beyond his highest hope, who fights on manfully under Christ's banner against sin; against the sin in himself, and in his neighbors, and in his parish, and faces the devil and his works wheresoever he may meet them, sure that the devil and his works must be conquered at the last, because God's wrath is gone out against them, and Christ, who executes God's wrath, will never sheath his sword till he has put all enemies under his feet, and death be swallowed up in victory.

Therefore, be not anxious about the morrow. Do to-day's duty, fight to-day's temptation; and do not weaken and distract yourself by looking forward to things which you cannot see, and could not understand if you saw them. Enough for you that your Saviour for whom you fight is just and merciful; for he rewardeth every man according to his work. Enough for

you that he has said, "He that is faithful unto death, I will give him a crown of life." Enough for you that if you be faithful over a few things, he will make you ruler over many things, and bring you unto his joy forevermore.

But as for vain fears, leave them to those who will not believe God's message concerning himself — that he is love, and his mercy over all his works. Leave them for those who deny God's righteousness, by denying that he has had pity on this poor fallen world, but has left it to itself and its sins, without sending any one to save it. And for real fears, leave them for those who have no fears; for those who think they see, and yet they are blind; who think themselves orthodox and infallible, and beyond making a mistake, every man his own Pope; who say that they see, and therefore their sin remaineth; for those who thank God that they are not as other men are, and who will find the publicans and harlots entering into the kingdom of heaven before them; and for those who continue in sin that grace may abound, and call themselves Christians, while they bring

shame on the name of Christ by their own evil lives, by their worldliness and profligacy, or by their bitterness and quarrelsomeness; who make religious profession a by-word and a mockery in the mouths of the ungodly, and cause Christ's little ones to stumble. Let them be afraid, if they will; for it were better for them that a millstone were hanged about their neck, and they were drowned in the midst of the sea. But those who hate their sins, and long to leave their sins behind; those who distrust themselves — let them not be anxious about the morrow; for to-morrow, and to-day, and forever, the Almighty Father is watching over them, the Lord Jesus guiding them wisely and tenderly, and the Holy Spirit inspiring them more and more to do all those good works which God has prepared for them to walk in, and to conquer in the life-long battle against sin, the world, and the devil.

# THE FRIEND OF SINNERS.

"And it came to pass, that, as Jesus sat at meat in his house, many publicans and sinners sat also together with Jesus and his disciples: for there were many and they followed him. And when the scribes and Pharisees saw him eat with publicans and sinners they said unto his disciples, How is it that he eateth and drinketh with publicans and sinners?" — *Mark* ii. 15, 16.

WE cannot wonder at the scribes and Pharisees asking this question. I think that we should most of us ask the same question now, if we saw the Lord Jesus, or even if we saw any very good or venerable man, going out of his way to eat and drink with publicans and sinners. We should be inclined to say, as the scribes and Pharisees no doubt said, Why go out of his way to make fellowship with them? to eat and drink with them? He might have taught them, preached to them, warned them of God's wrath against their sins when he could find them out in the street. Or, even if he could not do that, if he could not find them

all together without going into their house, why sit down and eat and drink? Why not say, No — I am not going to join with you in that? I am come on a much more solemn and important errand than eating. I have no time to eat. I must preach to you ere it be too late. And you would have no appetite to eat if you knew the terrible danger in which your souls are. Besides, however anxious for your souls I am, you cannot expect me to treat you as friends, to make companions of you and accept your hospitality, while you are living these bad lives. I shall always feel pity and sorrow for you, but I cannot be a table companion with you till you begin to lead very different lives.

Now if the scribes and Pharisees had said that, should we have thought them very unreasonable? For whatsoever kinds of sinners the sinners were, these publicans were the very worst and lowest of company. They were not innkeepers, as the word means now; they were a kind of tax-gatherers; but not like ours in England, for, first, these taxes were not taken by the Jewish government, but by the Romans

— heathen foreigners who had conquered them, and kept them down by soldiery quartered in their country. So that these publicans who gathered taxes and tribute for the heathen Cæsar of Rome from their own countrymen were traitors to their country, in league with their foreign tyrants, as it were devouring their own flesh and blood; and all the Jews looked on them (and really no wonder) with hatred and contempt. Beside, these publicans did not merely gather the taxes, as they do in free England; they farmed them, compounded for them with the Roman emperor; that is, they had each to bring in to the Romans a stated sum of money, each out of his own district, and to make their own profit out of the bargain by grinding out of the poor Jews all they could over and above; and most probably calling in the soldiery to help them if people would not pay. So this was a trade, as you may easily see, which could only prosper by all kinds of petty extortion, cruelty, and meanness; and, no doubt, these publicans were devourers of the poor, and as unjust and hard-hearted men as one could be.

As for those "sinners" who are so often mentioned with them, I suppose this is what the word means. These publicans making their money ill, spent it ill also, in a low, profligate way, with the worst of women and of men. Moreover, all the other Jews shunned them, and would not eat or keep company with them; so they hung all together, and made company for themselves with bad people, who were fallen too low to be ashamed of them. The publicans and harlots are often mentioned together; and, I doubt not, they were often eating and drinking together, God help them!

And God did help them. The Son of God came and ate and drank with them. No doubt he heard many words among them which pained his ears; saw many faces which shocked his eyes, — faces of women who had lost all shame; faces of men hardened by cruelty and greediness and cunning, till God's image had been changed into the likeness of the fox and the serpent; and, worst of all, the greatest pain to him of all, he could see into their hearts, their immortal souls, and see all the foulness within

them, all the meanness, all the hardness, all the unbelief in anything good or true. And yet he ate and drank with them. Make merry with them he could not; who could be merry in such company? but he certainly so behaved to them that they were glad to have him among them, though he was so unlike them in thought, and word, and look, and action.

And why? Because, though he was so unlike them in many things, he was like them at least in one thing. If he could do nothing else in common with them, he could at least eat and drink as they did, and eat and drink with them too. Yes. He was the Son of man, the man of all men, and what he wanted to make them understand was, that, fallen as low as they were, they were men and women still, who were made at first in God's likeness, and who could be redeemed back into God's likeness again.

The only way to do that was to begin with them in the very simplest way; to meet them on common human ground; to make them feel that, simply because they were men and women, he felt for them; that, simply because

they were men and women, he loved them; that, simply because they were men and women, he could not turn his back upon them, for the sake of his Father and their Father in heaven. If he had left those poor wretches to themselves; if he had even merely kept apart from their common, every-day life, and preached to them, they would never have felt that there was still hope for them, simply because they were men and women. They would have said in their hearts, "See; he will talk to us, but he looks down on us all the time. We are fallen so low, we cannot rise; we cannot mend. What is there in us that can mend? We are nothing but brutes, perhaps; then brutes we must remain. Heaven is for people like him, perhaps, but not for such as us. We are cut off from men. We have no brothers upon earth, no Father in heaven." "Let us eat and drink, for to morrow we die."

Yes, they would have said this; for people like them will say it too often now, here in Christian England.

But when our Lord came to them, ate and

drank with them, talked with them in a homely and simple way (for our Lord's words are always simple and homely, grand and deep and wonderful as they are), then do you not see how *self-respect* would begin to rise in those poor sinners' hearts? Not that they would say, "We are better men than we thought we were." No; perhaps his kindness would make them all the more ashamed of themselves, and convince them of sin all the more deeply, for nothing, nothing melts the sinner's hard, proud heart like a few unexpected words of kindness — ay, even a cordial shake of the hand from any one who he fancies looks down on him. To find a loving brother where he expected only a threatening schoolmaster — that breaks the sinner's heart; and most of all when he finds that brother in Jesus his Saviour. That — the sight of God's boundless love to sinners, as it is revealed in the loving face of Jesus Christ our Lord — that, and that alone, breeds in the sinner the broken and the contrite heart which is in the sight of God of great price. And so those publicans and sinners would not have be-

gun to say, We are better than we thought: but, We can become better than we thought. He must see something in us which makes him care for us. Perhaps God may see something in us to care for. He does not turn his back on us. Perhaps God may not. He must have some hope of us. May we not have hope of ourselves? Surely there is a chance for us yet. Oh! if there were! We are miserable now in the midst of our drunkenness, and our covetousness, and our riotous pleasures. We are ashamed of ourselves, and our countrymen are ashamed of us; and though we try to brazen it off by impudence, we carry heavy hearts under bold foreheads. Oh, that we could be different! Oh, that we could be even like what we were when we were little children! Perhaps we may be yet. For he treats us as if we were men and women still, his brothers and sisters still. He thinks that we are not quite brute animals yet, it seems. Perhaps we are not; perhaps there is life in us yet, which may grow up to a new and better way of living. What shall we do to be saved?

O blessed charity, bond of peace and of all virtues; of brotherhood and fellow-feeling between man and man, as children of one common Father. Ay, bond of all virtues — of generosity and of justice, of counsel and of understanding. Charity, unknown on earth before the coming of the Son of man, who was content to be called gluttonous and a wine-bibber, because he was the friend of publicans and sinners!

My friends, let us try to follow his steps; let us remember all day long what it is to be *men*; that it is to have every one whom we meet for our brother in the sight of God; that it is this: never to meet any one, however bad he may be, for whom we cannot say, "Christ died for that man, and Christ cares for him still. He is precious in God's eyes; he shall be precious in mine also." Let us take the counsel of the Gospel for this day, and love one another, not in word merely, in doctrine, but in deed and in truth, really and actually; in our every-day lives and behavior, words, looks — in all of them let us be cordial, feeling, pitiful, patient, courteous. Masters with your workmen, teach-

ers with your pupils, parents with your children, be cordial and kind and patient; respect every one, whether below you or not in the world's eyes. Never do a thing to any human being which may lessen his self-respect; which may make him think that you look down upon him, and so make him look down upon himself in awkwardness and shyness; or else may make him start off from you, angry and proud, saying, "I am as good as you; and if you keep apart from me, I will from you; if you can do without me, I can do without you. I want none of your condescension." It is *not* so. You cannot do without each other. We can none of us do without the other; do not let us make any one fancy that he can, and tempt him to wrap himself up in pride and surliness, cutting himself off from the communion of saints, and the blessing of being a man among men.

And if any of you have a neighbor, or a relation fallen into sin, even into utter shame, — oh, for the sake of Him who ate and drank with publicans and sinners, never cast them off,

never trample on them, never turn your back upon them. They are miserable enough already, doubt it not. Do not add one drop to their cup of bitterness. They are ashamed of themselves, already, doubt it not. Do not you destroy in them what small grain of self-respect still remains. You fancy they are not so. They seem to you brazen-faced, proud, impenitent. So did the publicans and harlots seem to those proud, blind Pharisees. Those pompous, self-righteous fools did not know what terrible struggles were going on in those poor sin-tormented hearts. Their pride had blinded them, while they were saying all along, "It is we alone who see. This people, which knoweth not the law, is accursed." Then came the Lord Jesus, the Son of man, who knew what was in man; and he spoke to them gently, cordially, humanly; and they heard him, and justified God, and were baptized, confessing their sins; and so, as he said himself, the publicans and harlots went into the kingdom of God before those proud, self-conceited Pharisees.

Therefore, I say, never hurt any one's self-

respect. Never trample on any soul, though it may be lying in the veriest mire; for that last spark of self-respect is as its only hope, its only chance; the last seed of a new and better life; the voice of God which still whispers to it, "You are not what you ought to be, and you are not what you can be. You are still God's child, still an immortal soul; you may rise yet, and fight a good fight yet, and conquer yet, and be a man once more, after the likeness of God who made you, and Christ who died for you!" Oh, why crush that voice in any heart? If you do, the poor creature is lost, and lies where he or she falls, and never tries to rise again. Rather bear and forbear; hope all things, believe all things, endure all things; so you will, as St. John tells you in the Epistle, know that you are of the truth, in the true and right road, and will assure your hearts before God. For this is his commandment, that we should believe in the name of his Son Jesus Christ, and believe really that he is now what he always was, the friend of publicans and sinners, and love one another as he gave us com-

mandment. That was Christ's spirit; the fairest, the noblest spirit upon earth; the spirit of God whose mercy is over all his works; and hereby shall we know that Christ abideth in us, by his having given us the same spirit of pity, charity, fellow-feeling and love for every human being round us.

And now, I will also give you one lesson to carry home with you — a lesson which if we all could really believe and obey, the world would begin to mend from to-morrow, and every other good work on earth would prosper and multiply tenfold, a hundredfold — ay, beyond all our fairest dreams. And my lesson is this: When you go out from this church into those crowded streets, remember that there is not a soul in them who is not as precious in God's eyes as you are; not a little dirty, ragged child whom Jesus, were he again on earth, would not take up in his arms and bless; not a publican or a harlot with whom, if they but asked him, he would not eat and drink — now, here, as certainly as he did in Jewry beyond the seas, eighteen hundred years ago. Therefore, do to

all who are in want of your help as Jesus would do to them if he were here; as Jesus is doing to them already, for he is here among us now, and forever seeking and saving that which was lost; and all we have to do is to believe that, and work on, sure that he is working at our head, and that though we cannot see him, he sees us; and then all will prosper at last, for this brave old earth whereon we are living now, and for that far braver new heaven and new earth whereon we shall live hereafter.